

DAWN

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A LOST ROMANCE OF THE TIME OF CHRIST



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A LOST ROMANCE OF
THE TIME OF CHRIST

BY
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BY THE AUTHOR

TO
THE BELOVED ONES
WHO GAVE ME THE FAITH
AND COURAGE FOR THIS TASK

BY THE AUTHOR

This task has not been lightly undertaken. For able assistance in the research I now acknowledge obligation to my honored friend Dr. Charles Kelsey Gaines, Professor of Greek in St. Lawrence University, and for half a century a student of the spirit and leading personalities of the ancient world. His novel of the time of Pericles entitled "Gorgo," said by that ripe scholar Lord Bryce, to be one of the greatest historical novels ever written, if not the greatest, illustrates the exceptional insight and knowledge of Professor Gaines. In securing the background of "DAWN," he and I made ourselves familiar with all accessible authorities.

I also visited the parts of the sacred land, in which my scenes are laid, from Hebron to Damascus and over the mountains and along the Mediterranean from Beyrout to Cæsarea now the lonely site of a vanished city sequestered by sand dunes. Its ruined walls and mole are seen after a difficult journey afoot rarely made by comfort-loving tourists.

I acknowledge a special sense of obligation to certain letters of St. Jerome, first for a detailed description of a man possessed of a demon; second, for the adventure of Malchus in the desert and the cave which gave me an incident and some attractive color.

FOREWORD

In the ancient monasteries on Mount Athos are many unknown manuscripts relating to Christian history as important in some respects as those approved by the Canon.

This narrative is based on the valuable content of many sheets of vellum purchased from the monks in one of these old monasteries in the remote past. The sheets presented a series of letters and sermons written in Latin and interesting only because of the exquisite, monkish script in which they were set down. For centuries they lay neglected, an object of mild interest to scholars in a certain library. Late in the last century a student discovered that the vellum held a palimpsest of great value, for beneath the script, in inerasable Greek made legible by acid, is a record of events from the sixteenth year of the reign of Tiberius to the late and deplorable period in the life of Domitian all in strict accord with known history.

It presents no new and important evidence, but its narrative of personal adventure and impressions in the time of the Great Shepherd is unusual and vivid. This record was too human to be able to survive the ascetic temper of the early Christian fathers.

PREFACE

BY THE STORY-TELLER OF COLOSSÆ

I have seen great comings and goings and the giving to man of immortal memories to guide and cheer him on his way through the endless ages. In this giving I would have a humble part. My own going cannot be long delayed nor will it be a pleasant thing for those who love me. It shall be theirs to bear witness to my joy and courage.

I have seen the long human caravan, weary of the hunger and thirst of the desert, halting to consider a new way to the city of God—a pleasant way, it was said, leading through green valleys cut by streams of living water, and there were those in the caravan—the same being the rich and powerful—who would neither leave the desert marches nor permit others to do so since the ancient way of going yielded them a profit. So a great contention arose, some turning one way and some another, and those who took the new road soon found it wet with their own blood and filled with torment, the mighty legions being set against them. But they pressed on, caring not for their own comfort, in very truth thinking only of those unborn and calling to all the children of men in words deathless and immortal as themselves, I am wont to believe, having felt their power. I was a humble member of that noble band and now, my work finished, I write of the mighty things in my memory.

DAWN

A LOST ROMANCE OF THE TIME OF CHRIST

Literature is concerned with personality,
with the spirit — with that which cries:
“O grave, where is thy victory?”

STUART M. SHERMAN.

MY MASTER

Toward a woeful death He bravely fared,
Rebuking priest and king.
The soul rot in the rich He bared,
And taught, as the fate of a thief He shared,
That death is a little thing.

And little to those who had felt His might,
Was the sting of death and the rod.
They made a lantern for His light,
And hung it high in the ancient night,
The glow in a window of God.

The ages turn to wrack and rust,
Lights fail in mighty hands,
Lo, thrones rept down by the scythe of Lust,
And nations turned to whirls of dust!
But still my Master stands.

Behold, in many a day of doom,
My Thorn-crowned Master slain!
And ever, as the ages loom,
Immortal from each new-made tomb,
He rises yet again!

CHAPTER I

THE DEATH WIND

I AM Doris of Colossæ, known by many as "The Woman of the Great Memories," and in this twelfth year of the reign of Domitian I have sworn, by the most high God, that I will write them down so that my readers shall be as they who have been wont to sit before me and listen, and this I do with no fear of the fate they shall bring upon me.

I was the daughter of Hilarios, a prosperous Greek trader of Pelusium, who boasted a chain of fathers connecting him with the time of Pericles. I had been with him to Damascus, and returning, our camels laden with treasure, we were far along on the ten sandy marches from Gaza to the Nile when came the death wind.

It is a blast from the opened doors of hell. First a hot stillness fell upon us and the wise old camels as they shambled on began to mutter and bellow. Then, eastward, we saw, afar, the desert whirling into the sky and heard the increasing roar of it. When a mighty wind is stripping the levels and shearing off the sand hills and, with the top of a hundred leagues gathered in its great arms, begins to hurl it upon a caravan, who can say where will be the end of the day's march?

That is what I saw. The sound of it was like the hissing and gnashing and raving of demons. The look

of it was like that of muddy water, and the heat of it! I swear by the life of God it is enough to dry the blood in your veins! I groan when I think of the feel of this demon, called the sirocco, for the feel of it was like the smiting of many lashes. My camel swayed and lowered his head like a ship in a hurricane. He stood back to the blast, moving slowly, put to it for breath, as I was myself with my kaffiyeh over my face. The wind-driven sand had the sting of thorns in it and began to rub the skin from my feet and legs and hands. Soon was I as those sick unto death. I cared not what happened, and our camels drifted like boats in a darkened sea, and were soon drowned in the hot whirl and went out of the sight of men forever.

Our caravan was scattered and overwhelmed in the great sirocco which came in the sixteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. In the memories of the oldest men there has been no death wind to be compared with this one. I think that I was the only person who survived it, for neither my father nor any of his men or camels, save one, were ever seen again.

Through the mercy of God it was the crumbling shelf above the mouth of a cave in the lee of a sand hill which stopped my camel. There he had fallen and in the cave I took refuge and lay down, overcome with a great weariness, and sheltered from the sting of the blast and with air enough to serve me. I know not how long I lay there, for sleep came after many hours of weeping and calling and listening. When I awoke a ray of sunlight shining through a little crevice in the mouth of the cave, then nearly closed, lay on my face. I arose and with no difficulty dug my way out. It was morning. There was no sign of man or beast on the

still waste around me. The sky was clear, the air motionless. The hot and mighty lungs of the east had grown weary and their breath had ceased its play with the sands of the desert.

I was alone. Not many know what it is to be alone. One is never alone who has food and water. Indeed one is not alone until his tent is the sky and his sorrow big enough to fill it—until his hunger and thirst are like the prick of thorns in his liver. Neither may one be acquainted with loneliness who has not lain down in a sand burrow at night and heard far away the roaring of lions as I have done.

Now I was not able to find a crumb of comfort either in looking forward or backward. My indulgent father had been my only friend, save my playmates, for my stepmother had a heart of stone and was jealous of his love of me and eager to put me out of my home. Nor had I any joy in the thought of my betrothal, wholly of her doing, to Theros, son of a rich trader in Alexandria. Teros was lame and much older than I and had not a pleasant face. Ever the sight of him had chilled my heart.

Now in this plight I made the discovery of myself and of this truth that I could not endure the thought of being perfectly alone. If I had had a stick or a stone it would have given me some comfort. In my desperate need, although my father had taught me to put no faith in the gods, I fell on my face and prayed to Apollo for the time had come when I could see no source of help save the sky. It is strange that I should have found strength and comfort in my prayer as I did, and I began to wander, searching the great waste and calling.

I was sick with thirst and hunger and not for food and water alone but for loving sympathy and companionship. I was seeking a place to lie down and die, some cave to give me friendly cover when, near the end of the day, at a place where the wind had left a great heap when it ceased playing I saw the feet of a camel sticking out of the sand. Digging with my hands I uncovered the poor beast and found on his back a waterskin half full and some bread and wild honey.

Never until then did I know the sweetness of water and the goodness of bread. It put life and a spark of hope in me. I found hanging on the saddle the figure of a man about as long as my hand which the camel driver had cunningly carved in wood. I kissed it and named it Apollo and put its string around my neck.

I found also a bundle of beautiful robes woven of camel's hair and embroidered with flowers gayly colored, which my father had bought in Damascus. I took one of these and spread it over my shoulders, for the evening was cool and this is a strange thing and worthy to be part of the record. Alone as I was and weary and sore with grieving, I sat down and spread the lovely thing over my lap and found a moment's comfort in the splendor of it. I wanted to live then. I think that vanity is about the last thing that dies in a fair maiden.

I was beautiful those days. Both my eyes and ears were convinced of that, for those to remind me of the truth were not wanting. I was a blonde-haired, dark-eyed, fair-skinned maid of fifteen and was to be given in marriage that autumn. My father was wont to call me "The Lily of Hellas" and that phrase was the very corner stone of my pride.

My little wooden Apollo was a great help to me. We had many talks together. He was my confidant. He knew of all the scoldings and beatings I had suffered. Three times a day I set up my little god in the sand before me and prayed to him. Such are the things one will do who is utterly alone. And to this memory I owe the thought that the gods of my fathers were better than none and that in them was the first glimmer of the greater light to come. Therefore, I despise them not.

After three days in the lonely, terrible waste I came to a high, rocky mountain which my eyes had beheld since the morning of that third day. Springs of living water gushed from under the feet of it and joined in a stream shaded by many palm trees and flowing out to a wide plain. Along the stream were waving reeds and grasses and there were wild flowers on the green slopes leading up the mountainside. I thought that I had never seen a place so beautiful. It was like the great gardens of princes.

I put my arms around the first tree I came to and kissed it. As I knelt and thanked Apollo for his kindness the sound of the breeze in its branches I fancied to be that of his fabled lyre. Oh, the heavenly voices in a tree when one has just come to it after a long journey in the desert!

I sat down to enjoy its friendly companionship, and the gentle song of the tree wooed me to sleep. The sunlight of another morning awoke me. I disrobed and went into the stream to bathe. Suddenly I was startled by the sound of galloping hoofs. A band of Ishmaelites had come over a hill and were descending upon me, their flowing hair bound with fillets, their

bodies half naked, their cloaks streaming behind them, their bows and quivers slung upon their shoulders. They carried long spears in their hands. There were camels coming behind them. The horsemen halted near where I stood and looked down upon me.

My nakedness was only partly covered by the reeds and wild flowers of the river margin and by my thick hair streaming down to my hips. In a panic of fear and shame I reached for my beautiful robe lying close to my hand and, draping it around me, sprang ashore. The sun shone on its threads of gold and on the silken glory of its flowers. The men shaded their eyes and looked into the distance and then upon me. Not a word was spoken. With a gesture the chief sent scouts ahead to look for my caravan. They returned. There was no caravan.

The chief and his first counselor and his three wives dismounted and came to my side. The wonder of the giant Ishmaelite captain turned to fear as he looked at me. One of the women felt my robe with an exclamation of delight. He sternly called her back to his side and spoke a sentence in a deep tone. I had learned of my father enough of the desert dialect to get his meaning.

"She is not of this world." Those were his words, and his wise man had nodded and he said: "She is standing under a tree and by running water. Know you not the meaning of it?"

The other shook his head.

"It is written that such a one standing alone is a daughter of the gods."

I found three dry branches and thrust them deep in the sand and spread my robe over them and standing

behind it put on my garments and bound up my hair.

Then erect before them, I spoke by signs telling them that I was from above and that I would go with them and protect them from all peril to the end of their journey.

They bowed their heads and whispered a prayer and set me on the noblest camel in their caravan, whereupon, every belly and bottle having been filled with water, we turned and began our long journey.

The Ishmaelites have faces hard as the rocks of Judea and as dark and bitter as the waters of Marah. Our chief was a stern man albeit, now and then, I saw a kindly light in his eyes and heard a tone in his voice that reminded me of my father. He was tall and strong as a lion and bearded and gray, with deep lines in his face and long silvered tufts over his dark eyes. In a fight his voice was like thunder and his face like those of the great cats of the desert. He gave me the hospitality due an honored guest and a mat of woven goat's hair in his own tent to lie upon and the choicest bits of food from the great pot. It came of his fear of me, a fear that bore hard upon them and upon me as well, for I grew weary of maintaining the dignity of a goddess.

On the seventh day we captured a rich caravan after a hard fight in which many were slain. Among our captives was a youth of my own land, as I supposed, for he spoke Greek as did the well-born Athenians and had the Greek head and manners. He was tall and strong with a face and form beautiful to look upon and waving brown hair and dark eyes.

We journeyed on, the captives riding blindfolded,

and came after many days to a land of rocky mountains and great caves and rich, fertile valleys in which were herds and flocks.

There was the little kingdom of Furoras, the desert bandit chief, and his clan into whose hands I had fallen. Their strength was three hundred bows and spears. They lived in tents and caves, tilling the land and moving their flocks through the mountain valleys. The bandit put his captives to work in this far, strange land on the edge of the great desert where escape was almost impossible.

The comely young captive was brought to the chief's tent the evening of our arrival and I was bidden to tell him that his work would be that of a shepherd and that the price of his ransom would be two hundred drachmæ and that his wages would be forty drachmæ a year, and further, that if he did his work well he should have his liberty at the end of four years and a camel and plenty of food with which to return to his people.

He stood with a noble pride in his face when I addressed him. He reminded me of the beautiful figure of Apollo, which I had once seen in a journey to Athens. He looked not at me as I spoke nor when with polite dignity he accepted the offer of the bandit which had come through my lips. His indifference wounded me. I wanted to be seen of him. This the keen eye of the chief discovered and kept in his memory.

Now among these people and in high favor with their chief was a mighty bowman called No Name—the most memorable figure that I saw in this unknown land save that of Furoras. Strong built of a middle

stature with shorn face and bent nose, his only distinguishing feature was a pair of hairy hands. He had unerring aim with the bow and arrow and a most playful spirit. Often I saw his arrows cleave a golden apple held between the fingers of one of the fighting men. He was withal a sorcerer and serpent charmer and was wont to amuse the tribe with his magic. Scorpions were his favorite playfellows and I had seen him stop a cobra and cause it, by crooning, to lift its head and spread its hood. Soon he stroked the serpent and then, seizing and lifting it in his hairy hand, would rob it of its venom and catch the slow, bubbling, iridescent stream in a cup. This he used on the points of his fighting arrows. Ever when I have thought of this man a vision of his death-dealing quiver and mighty bow and hairy hands has come to me.

Now there is an old saying among my people that a day with a prince is a pleasure, a week is a weariness, and a month is death. The chief and his wives had grown weary of living with a goddess. I was not a good companion. They feared me and were ready to embrace an opportunity to be rid of me without giving offense. They had grown a little careless of my comfort and were now feeding me on cheese and camel's milk since I had eaten it with no sign of displeasure. Indeed I owed them a grateful heart and a smiling face for any kind of clean food they might choose to give me.

I wondered how I could take advantage of their favorable disposition and return to my people. Yet, feeling sure that my father had gone to another world, I had in me no longing for my home such as the young are apt to cherish. They gave me a fine horse and

liberty to ride when and where I pleased and often the favorite wife, whose name was Ila, went with me. We talked freely together, for I had been quick to learn their dialect, being quite familiar with the Arab tongue, and she asked me to tell her of the world whence I had come and I spoke like an oracle, telling much that I had imagined of the home of the gods.

And one day when we were up on a mountainside and our black tents were like fly specks on the distant plain, she said it had come to her that my return to the happy land of the gods would the sooner pass if I had a man to go along the way with me.

"When one is of your age the days have leaden feet until she has found a man to love and honor and serve," she sighed.

And before I knew it being in the very springtime of my youth, I had answered from my heart: "It is true."

Then she added: "I have a beautiful young man for you—a Greek who, like you, is as one who has come out of that flowery oasis in the desert of eternity where the gods live. I have never seen a man at whose feet I would more gladly kneel if it could be safely done. My master will be pleased to give him to you."

She was a handsome, stately woman, and she playfully touched my breast as she spoke.

This was my answer: "I am sure that he would not want me."

"You—a goddess! Impossible! If he refused you he should be slain."

Now I was a tender maid and the threat touched the soul in me, and I said: "I think that he should be pardoned. It is not easy to live with a goddess."

She smiled and gave me a look which seemed to say:

"Let me soon be done with it," and quickly assured me: "He shall be yours," and, spurring her horse, added: "Come, let us hurry."

The thought came to me: "I would much prefer to be his," but she was off before I could speak the words.

That evening the handsome youth was brought to the great tent of the chief. I was sitting on my rug playing with one of the children, when the favorite came for me and carefully arranged my hair and put a golden fillet around it and draped my gorgeous robe over my shoulders so as not wholly to conceal my charms. Then she led me to the place where Furoras sat with the godlike son of Hellas standing near him. The latter was naked save for a leopard skin around his loins. And the desert robber rising, bowed to me and said:

"This youth has done well with his flock. Tell him that I give him praise and new rugs for his cave and a robe of the fur of young goats and a copper pot and a wife to live with him and to speed his days in a far country."

As to my own part in this proceeding let it be known that I had two fears—one of the giant bandit who had been losing his awe of me, one of the strangely sweet, inviting peril of being given to the beautiful youth.

I dreaded my task, and if I had dared to do so I should have refused to perform it, but dreading more the wrath of the chief I conveyed his message.

Then for the first time the young man turned and looked at me and smiled, saying:

"My sweet maid, does he wish *me* to take *you*?"

I turned to Furoras and asked: "Am I to be his wife?"

And he answered: "That is my command."

Now in setting down these memories it were better, I think, to hide no part of them though they bring a pang of shame to me. So I confess the truth that I was glad and I turned to the youth and nodded.

In a gentle tone he answered: "If you were some old hag of the desert I could agree. You are too young and beautiful. I will have nothing to do with you. Tell him that I want not a wife."

When I spoke again I think that Furoras caught a note of disappointment and surprise in my voice. The haughty bandit drew his sword and would have slain the youth if he had not stretched out his arm and taken me and led me from the tent. The night was dark and we shrank from each other as we walked, he holding my hand.

"I would gladly have saved you this if I could," I said with tears in my eyes.

"I have been as stern as Cæsar and you know not why," he answered, and there was that in his tone and words which made me aware that he was a youth of gentle breeding. We had come to the young man's cave. A slave of Furoras—a giant Edomite with a face like a leopard's—had followed with the rugs and robe and pot. My companion kindled a flame from the embers in a pit and lighted a candle.

He spread the rugs, woven of goats' wool, placing them far apart on opposite sides of the cave and saying, as he did so:

"I know your beauty and the power of it, you daughter of Hellas, but I swear by the glory of God that I will not look upon you or touch your flesh again. You have not suffered from the unholy hands of the Ish-

maelite because he fears you. I fear you also, but for another reason."

"And I came here with a great fear of *you*," I said.

"Fear not," he answered. "You shall see that I have in me the blood of noble fathers and something they knew not. That you may the more easily despise me I tell you that I am not a Greek, but a Jew born in Alexandria and educated in Athens. My people owe no love to yours but my heart is clean of all resentment. I shall care for you and protect you from all evil, even at the peril of my life, and keep you for a better man and a better marriage."

He put my rug on one side of the cave and his on the other. He lay down for the night, saying:

"May your dreams take you home and be filled with loving words and faces."

"I wish you the same good luck," I said.

"Mine will be the better if, when you lie down, you will put out the lamp," he answered.

In a moment I was lying in the darkness and thinking of the beautiful fair-spoken youth and of our fear of each other and that night I dreamed not of home but of him.

When I awoke the sun, just risen above the far edge of the plain, glowed in the mist so that my eyes seemed to see a golden curtain over the mouth of the cave. My companion was pouring water from a ewer into a large wooden bowl. Thus he greeted me as I arose:

"I wish you a happy day, my fair maid of old Hellas. I shall go to the fold while you are bathing and soon return. You will find bread and cheese and dried meat in the jar yonder. Refresh yourself and we will go

together into the hills with the flock. I would not leave you here alone."

When he had returned, he said to me, smiling as he spoke: "I think that a lady should know the name of the man she lives with. Know, therefore, that my father named me Apollos, and I think it a poor fit for one so humble. Now may I know what name is yours?"

"Doris," I answered.

"It hath a sound as gentle as your heart. Come, the flock is loosed. Let us go to the green slopes."

The sheep and goats were cropping the scanty herbage of the hillside. They streamed along behind us, Apollos playing on his pipe, and a pretty art he had with it. When we were seated and the flock feeding below us, he said:

"I put no faith in these Ishmaelites. They would have us breed some white slaves for them. A white slave reared in the tribe is to them a treasure which wins the favor of their gods. If their women come to visit you it were well for you to say nothing of our way of life. They would put me to torture or give you to another man not so worthy of the honor of protecting you."

Then it was that I began to feel the noble strength and greatness of the youth, for young as I was I had some knowledge of the world and small faith in the goodness of men. There had been in his voice a note quite new to me which had won my confidence.

That day as we sat together or slowly followed the flock he told me Homer's story of the wanderings of Ulysses and his companions, and much of it, as I have

since learned, word for word, as it is written on the rolls. The tale and the noble music of its lines thrilled me and sped the watches of each day.

So our time passed, many days and nights, and through them all he kept his oath, never even touching my hand, and if he looked upon me I knew it not, although I never tired of looking upon him.

Twice he spoke to me after this fashion: "Little friend, I love to talk to you, and it has become a pleasure to have you near me, but I cannot be your husband. I have not the conceit to think that you could grow fond of me. Still I warn you be as I am and keep your heart chained. Remember you are a haughty, patrician Greek and I a Jew. We could not marry even if it were possible."

I knew that while my people bought and sold with the Jews, in a friendly manner, they never ate or prayed or married with them. But Apollos was not like the Jews I had seen—cheap tradesmen on the merchant highway. He had a look in his face, a note in his voice, a noble grace in his bearing which I had found not in any Jew or Gentile. To me he was a magnificent man, a big, gentle, beautiful human being. He was the man of my dreams. In spite of his aloofness, he cared for me as if I had been the favorite lamb in his flock. I thought not of his religion but only of my own and in that he became my Apollo. It was natural that it should have been so, for I knew no other god worth having. In my secret thought I exalted and glorified him. Thinking of those days, I am able to understand the heart of Ruth when she lay at the feet of Boaz.

It so befell that one evening when we had come up out of the valleys the bandit Furoras met us at the cave.

Something in the look of me displeased him. He was familiar, laying on me an offensive hand. I had ceased to be a goddess. He left us hurriedly with a frowning face. After he had gone, Apollos went out of the cave. Returning, he said:

"He has mounted his horse and gone back to his people. Our time has come; we must be off. He will make of you a strumpet slave."

"Whither shall we go?" I asked.

"We shall hide in distant caves until we get to the great river; then cross it and commit our feet to the desert with the sun and stars to guide us, trusting in One who will give us help if we can but keep ourselves worthy of it."

"What shall we do for food and water?" I asked.

"I have killed two young goats and dried their flesh and made water bottles of their skins. We shall be sorely tried in days to come. God help us. If only you were not so young and beautiful and it were not needful, now and then, for me to be looking upon you. And must I not be touching your hand in the darkness?"

Let the truth be known in these memories of mine. No child of God was more human. I was like a reed in the wind. It was in my heart to say I was glad that he would have to look upon me, but I held my tongue and he added:

"We shall know many perils, but the greatest of them will be ourselves."

Immediately we began to prepare for our journey.

A coil of stout cord was looped around his waist. Our blankets in a close-wrapped bundle were lashed to his back. On my shoulders he hung his bow and quiver.

"It is our only weapon save the innocent knife in my belt which knows not the taste of blood," he said.

"I could also carry the blankets," I insisted.

"You are a woman and with all the courage you need your burden will be heavy enough."

CHAPTER II

IN THE LION'S LAIR

HE filled the bottles with water and a sack with the dried flesh and slung them over his shoulders. I had woven a garment out of threads spun and dyed by my own hands while I dwelt in the great tent of Furoras. This, the bow and arrows and my fine robe and two tiny silver flasks of musk and amber hanging to my wrists were my only burden as we set out together in the darkness. We traveled all night and as silently as the stars above us. Apollos knew the mountain region, leading me through deep, dark vales and over lofty ridges, giving me his hand in places of danger on the steeps.

"Fear not, I am your shepherd," he said to me. "Those are the words I have been hearing in my soul this night. I think that the Great Shepherd has hold of my hand. Now I fear not even you."

I wondered whom he meant when he spoke of the "Great Shepherd."

We were weary and had bleeding feet when the dawn light came on the far side of the mountains. He said to me:

"Be of good cheer. We shall soon be resting. I know a cave in this land where our lives will not be imperiled by men or wild beasts or serpents. Sit here a moment while I go to look for it."

There I waited, and when he returned the distant mountaintops were wearing crowns of gold and their glory was reflected in the broad river far below me. Beyond it were the dim reaches of the desert. My companion led me to his cave, the mouth of which was in the face of a steep rock wall about a man's length below its top. From the narrow ledge at its opening, not wider than my hand, the cliff fell sheer downward a great depth. He bade me tie his cord around my waist. That done he made its end fast to a sturdy terebinth and I descended, clinging to the rock crevices with my feet and one hand while I sustained a part of my weight with the cord. He came down in a like manner.

The cave was a great niche in the mountain about as broad as it was long and deep and that not more than a dozen paces. Its floor and dome and walls were of flinty rock. A wind drift of desert sand and withered leaves lay on its floor. We sat and slaked our thirst and ate of the bread and dried meat in our sack. Then he searched the walls and wind litter for scorpions.

And among my memories of that journey there is one I love to dwell upon. When I had lain down he gently washed my bruised and fevered feet with the cool water and put healing ointment on them and covered me with my robe and placed the half-filled bottle under my head.

Leaving me, he said: "Innocent maiden, my tongue is bridled, but my hands have a way of speaking."

He had changed since the journey began. He was more tender of me. Was it because of my childlike adoration of him, my unwavering faith in his power and goodness, or had he begun to know my heart? I

was not long to be in doubt. When I awoke he sat looking out into the sky. I arose and he said to me:

"My pretty one, you know not what a trial you are to me. I dared not stay with you here. I went above and slept under the trees. Happy am I that the day is ending. While there is light I will go above and survey the lower country. This night we must meet no wandering wild men of the desert."

He left me and soon returned, saying:

"I can see a day's journey to the east, the north, and the south. We have nought to fear this night."

As I looked up at him our eyes met and I said:

"Being with you I have no fear."

A look of sadness came over his face. More than once I had seen it come, like the shadow of a passing cloud, when a note of the song in my heart had bubbled out of my lips. He said:

"My little sister, I think it time you should know that I left a wife in Palestine and she and I have sworn by the one God that we will be true to each other. I have spoken not of her, save in my prayers, because I know not whether she be with the living or the dead."

"A wife!" I exclaimed, with a pang in my heart. I could feel it writhing with pain.

"A wife! and she is a crown to my head. She is like the odor of musk. I hope it may please God to lead me back to her."

He bent his head and covered his face. For a time I was silent. I could not have spoken if I had tried. I turned away, not wishing him to see my tears.

"Be of good cheer," he said. "I am your friend and hope to take you back to your people as worthy of their honor as when you left them. You know not the

mighty things I have seen. A new King has come—a Great Shepherd of the people. He has exalted women. He has crowned them with the favor of Heaven, for a woman gave Him to the world. I saw Him touch the head of one possessed of demons and eaten with leprosy and she went forth cleansed and in her right mind. The forsaken find a ready ear and a tender heart in Him. He hath appointed me to be a friend of the friendless. So has He raised a wall between you and me. It can be broken. We are human and as frail as reeds without help. In my best hours, I would as soon waylay a caravan as rob you of the honor which is rightly yours and which is your protection against the stones of the merciless. But I would have you know there are times when Satan touches my arm.”

I could have fallen at his feet and kissed them.

I asked: “Who and where is the wonderful King you speak of?”

And the noble youth answered: “He is the Messiah foretold by our prophets. I saw Him in Capernaum when we stopped there on our way from Gerasa where these many years I have been living. I can say, with our prophet Ezekiel, ‘He hath given me a new heart and a new spirit.’ ”

I said: “My father and I heard of Him when we were coming down from Damascus toward the desert. Many people were on the road going to see Him and to hear His words—hundreds were on their way to Capernaum, carrying the sick and leading the blind and lagging along behind them were many cripples. It touched my heart to look upon them and I asked one, a Greek, whither they were going and he answered:

"'We go to see Jesus of Nazareth.'

"And my father said that He was, no doubt, a great sorcerer.

"Tell me of this Messiah who can line the long, white road with people, leaving their work and homes to see Him. And why go they who cannot see Him? And why the lame and the sick?"

He answered: "As God is my judge I will tell you the truth. Every day I think of the look of Him. I see Him now. How can I show you the picture with only the words of a humble man to help me? Try to think of a noble king without a royal robe or a throne or a palace or any gold or silver or precious stones, yet grander to behold than Solomon on his throne and wiser than all the wise men of the past gathered into one. And He has a voice for His wisdom which is like the music of a mighty harp, now sweet and gentle, now swelling into ominous thunder. I have heard it when it was even as the voice of Jehovah breaking the cedars. He has a tall, heroic figure and is beautiful to look upon. He is like a green and shapely tree to one coming out of the desert. He put me in mind of the things written of old. He hath the sought face, the head lifted up and crowned with the everlasting joy. Oh, as He stands or walks before you He is a majestic king! And this is a strange thing about Him. He leaves you not when you leave Him. He goes with you. Your memory has become a living spirit, a shepherd of your soul."

He paced up and down a moment, and added with a strange light in his countenance: "He speaks not as any other man has spoken, I think, since the world began—as one who knows. He speaks not of what is writ-

ten in the dying law, but of what is written in His own heart and you know that it is God's truth. To hear Him say it is a mighty thing, for His words are writ in fire across the firmament of your soul. They live with you."

"And what does He say?" I asked, for this wonder talk of my companion had begun to quicken the blood in me.

"He tells us that we are all children of one Father and that we ought to love each other and forgive those who mistreat us and to hate no one. Now I have seen enough of the world to know that it is perishing for the need of love. The Romans rob and oppress us and we rob and oppress each other. Bandits are on the highways. See what has happened to my father and to me. He is dead. Our caravan is scattered, our goods stolen. You and I are the slaves of robbers. To-day one may be happy. To-morrow his home is ravaged—his life, his property, and his family gone. Some years I have lived in Palestine. It is a little land, but I tell you that since Herod began his reign enough people have been murdered there to fill the deepest vale of Judea with corpses. Saving the rich and powerful, those who remain are the mad, the bereaved, the robbed, the bitter-minded. The land is full of widows and orphans. Mostly widows are a jest and a plaything. Many have none to protect them. They are exposed to insult and outrage. Their names are soon in the songs of drunkards. My mother and my wife are now widows, and my hope is that they may find Him."

The handsome youth arose and looked out into the gathering dusk. In a moment he turned and said to me:

"We must descend and be on our way before the darkness falls."

"I have a mighty fear of the desert," I groaned. "It is like the sleeping lion."

"It is big and terrible and we are very small," Apollos answered. "But this I would have you remember: The great Messiah put His hand on my brow and said:

"'My son, I give you a task.'

"'And what is it, my Master?' I quickly asked.

"'I appoint you to be a friend of the friendless and forsaken,' He answered.

"So I must keep and protect you, my little one, and if I am faithful I think that He will neither take my task from me nor me from it."

We climbed the cliff wall, holding to the cord, and began our journey down the slopes toward the river now touched, here and there, with the fading gold in the sky. A long time we walked and were in black darkness when we reached the river. Here Apollos filled our skins with air and we got astride them floating with the current and pushing with hands and feet. The snorting and tumbling of some great beast in the river not far away—the harder to bear because of the darkness—filled me with terror. Apollos took my fear away when he said:

"Be not afraid, my little one. Think of what I have told you of the new King. Let us hold to Him. The thought is strong in me that He has a better use for us than to be food for crocodiles."

We pushed ourselves to the far shore and a long way down the river when our feet touched a sand bar on which we waded to a smooth beach. There we

filled ourselves and our bottles with water. Our meat was sodden. It could not last long, but we chose a star in the east and bravely set out on a journey, so hopeless that we could not hide our misery at the thought of it. We traveled far in silence. Then he spoke:

"Our food cannot last more than three days. We have not long to wait."

We were in the desert when the dawn began to light the sky and the dim reaches of sand. A great weariness had come and chiefly our feet were reminding us of our need of rest. We ate and drank so little that we lay down sick with self-denial and almost angry with ourselves. We burrowed in the lee of a sand hill, in doing which one has need to be careful that the hill is not too steep for fear of caving, and of being smothered in his sleep. We slept, waking not until the sun was low.

The desert was then a beautiful thing to look upon with the sun hanging above the edge of it, red as a great poppy. The hill shadows were lying long on the dun plains. I had been dreaming of limpid streams of cold water. It was indeed our thirst and hunger which awoke us. We ate and drank our fill, being so put to it that we could not stop until we were satisfied. Then said Apollos:

"Another such an orgy and we shall have little left. We must be fair to our bodies if we are to call upon them for long marches. Nevertheless, this shall be a day of fasting for me. It will be good for my soul which has need of discipline. I have a pebble to put in the bottom of the cup and shall drink only as much as will cover it."

Again we set out, but for a time our guiding stars were covered with clouds. Said Apollos as we chose our way:

"You will remember that the prince boasted of his ships, which were loaned to Ulysses, that they had a spirit in them to point the way in cloudy weather. For a time we can rely on our good sense, for there are stars in the west and we must keep them squarely behind us. When they fail it may be a spirit will point the way."

Soon the eastern sky was clear and the friendly stars shining down upon us. Far in the night we startled a herd of wild asses.

"There will be drink and perhaps wild fruit not far from here," said my companion.

I was weary and athirst. The gurgling of the water in one of the bottles which Apollos carried had been teasing me. I had found it hard to endure, for it had been telling of the unspeakable joy it was able to give. It boasted; it mocked me; it laughed at my misery. It reminded me that all the kingdoms of the world were as nothing compared with a single cup of water. A long time this boastful mockery had been going on until my desire burned like a fire in me.

"Oh, let me rest and drink," I pleaded.

He halted, saying: "Forgive me, my pretty maiden, I forget that you have not the strength of a man. Sit down here by this heap of sand and I will refresh you with food and water."

"No, I will not drink," I said, "I will wait until morning."

He shook the water bottle. The sound of it put me in a quiver of excitement. Then he asked: "Is it

not like music? Drink. Worse than my own thirst would be the knowledge that you suffer."

He poured into the cup and I drank, but sweeter than the grateful water were the words with which he offered it. He slung the bottle over his shoulder.

"Are you not thirsting?" I asked.

"Like Tantalus," he answered. "The sound of water is like that of gold to the ear of a miser."

"Please drink," I pleaded. "Unless you drink I cannot go on, for every time I put down my foot I should be stepping on my heart."

As I stood looking up at him, the bright, horned moon shone upon my face.

"Would it grieve you?" he asked.

And this was my answer: "The thought of you would be like thorns in my feet."

"Then I shall drink one cup."

He poured and drank, and I said: "Now let us rest a while, for my legs are weary."

We sat down together and he put his arm around me and drew me close to him, and these words were like the taste of the water: "How can we help this growing fondness, my beloved? We are so alone, and the hearts of men were made for fondness."

The sound of his voice, the feel of his hand and lips were like the mocking laughter of the water bottle.

The thing that happened then is like many events of my time over which I have heard much caviling. Those days it was no more to me than the splash of a pebble cast into a stream, but now that I can see the fashioning of my years it has become a link in a chain of mysteries drawing me slowly unto this Mount of Vision where I sit.

Before I could speak the words waiting in my heart and eager to be spoken, we heard the roaring of lions and the rush of many feet. My heart began to thump with its terror.

Apollos turned away and listened. In a moment he whispered: "By the mercy of God, sit still and do not speak! Lions have charged the wild asses that ran ahead. The little beasts have saved us. The lions have got their food or they would be stalking you and me. We must lie here very quietly until morning."

So suddenly for us—in the twinkling of an eye as it were—the wind had turned, else I am sure this little caravan of my history would have been lost in its first march.

Silently we burrowed in the sand, covering our bodies. For a little time I could hear the lions growling over their kill. Then in the silence I heard Apollos whispering the name of the new King and a prayer to Him. After a long time sleep came in the stillness.

Lying in the shadow of the sand hill I did not awake until the sun was halfway up the sky. Apollos sat near me. As I began to uncover myself, he said:

"I think that God has filled the lions with meat and sent them away. I can see nothing of them. All our lives we shall remember this night, my innocent one, and thank God for His mercy. He hath made the great cats of the desert to be our friends."

He knelt and I beside him for the first prayer I ever offered to the God of the Jews. Where we knelt we could see the tracks of the wild asses leading off across the level sand.

"They have gone in the way we travel," said Apollos. "We must not follow them. We may each

have a piece of meat as big as my thumb and water enough to cover the pebble in the cup—no more. I am resolved to keep a hard heart in me, my little sister. To-night we may be in paradise, but haply there will be no great sin upon us."

We ate and drank our slight allowance and set out leaving our course, as Apollos saw it, to avoid the asses' tracks and traveling slowly and searching the waste with our eyes. We saw no sign of the beasts and soon had our shadows pointing in the right direction. We went on, without speaking, until they were long on the sand straight ahead of us. Here the desert lay in great billows like a wind-tossed sea. On the crest of one of them Apollos stopped and shaded his eyes, looking into the distance and saying:

"There will be an oasis not a league ahead of us."

Not more than three bowshots from where we stood I could see a wild fowl flying and a new kind of ground with here and there a bit of faded herbage. We hurried on and soon saw, with a great gladness in our hearts, a rock hill, with a cave in its side, and thick green bushes at its base and scattered on its slope. Apollos turned, searching the sand waste on every side of us. Suddenly he exclaimed in a trembling voice:

"By the life of God! Look yonder."

I looked and saw in the distance two men coming over a sand wave on camels. They were moving rapidly.

"Our footprints have betrayed us," said Apollos. "It is our master, Furoras, and another. They will slay me and seize you. Come, we must run."

While he was speaking he seized my hand and we ran as fast as our feet could carry us toward the rock

hill. In a moment we had entered its cave. There we stepped carefully for fear of serpents, scorpions, and basilisks. The cave ran far back and dipped downward into black darkness. Its ceiling was so low that Apollos had to stoop as we advanced in its dim-lit chamber, the floor of which lay deep under loose sand. Its air was rank with strong odors, one of which was that of decaying flesh. We went not far into the gloom but took refuge in a pit, lest in fleeing from one death we should meet another. Neither of us had spoken and in the soft sand our feet had made no sound. We lay there as still as the hiding fox and I with a terror in me of which often I have dreamed, for its scar is still upon my spirit. Soon we heard voices at the cave entrance. Peering out I saw the angry giant, Furoras, and his big, leopard-faced, Edomite slave. They held spears in their hands. The bandit called to us in a loud voice, saying that we should fare the better if we came without resistance.

When my friends and others have come to my little house to learn of the great things in my memory and I have told of these starlit journeys on the desert and have grown weary of the telling, I have been wont to stop, at this place, and bid them come another night, knowing that neither storm nor peril could keep them away. For when I tell what follows I wish my rugs to be crowded with sitters and to have a rested tongue for the task. I have found it a wise way of procedure, since those who have listened are the better prepared for what is to come if they have time to think and talk of the things that lead up to it.

I thought of proposing that we go down into the farther darkness where there was better hiding. I

lifted my eyes and peered in that direction and saw the head of a great lioness. Attracted by the shouting, she had come up out of the black cavern and stood crouched, looking out at the two men. I heard Furoras command his slave to enter and drag us from the cave. The slave entered, spear in hand. He groped along, stopping a little beyond where we lay. Coming out of the sunlight, he was so blinded that he could not see us.

He shouted with poised spear: "Come out, you thieves, and die. Your master waits for you."

I saw the lioness crouching deeper as if to tighten her bow. Then her huge form shot forward like an arrow urged by the string. She hit his breast and down they went in the flying dust. One cry for help came from his lips before her fangs had strangled him. Then I saw her drag him out of sight in the far darkness. Knowing that the giant Furoras, ignorant of the fate of his slave, would quickly follow to help him, I turned my gaze. There was no one at the cave's mouth. Furoras had run to get his shield, for in a moment he returned with the shield on his left arm, the spear in his right hand. Thus equipped to take our lives from us he hastened into that little valley of death, pushing almost to the edge of the black darkness and calling loudly to his slave. Then for the shortest moment I felt the teetering of the balance, knowing that he would quickly discover us and wondering if the queen of beasts, so defied, would put an end to his shouting. Swiftly the great beast fell upon him like a thunderbolt, but I saw only his whirling fall, a flash of dun fur, and a cloud of dust where he had stood. Then I heard the sound of his limp legs dragging over the sand bed.

Apollo rose and seized my hand. Without speaking we hastened from that evil place, mounted the two camels that stood near, and rode away, urging them to their best speed. The sun was low and across the distant, dimly lit plain we could see palm tops against the sky. When in the falling night we had traveled more than two leagues from the lion's lair we slackened pace and Apollo said to me:

"On these camels are sacks of food and bottles of wine and water. As for myself I know that the hand of God has been leading and protecting us even from the guile of Satan. 'He hath changed the shadow of death into morning.'"

My maiden mind was by no means prepared for deep convictions. I knew not what to say. Those men had awakened the lioness and called her up out of the darkness by their shouting and she had slain them. We had kept silent and out of sight in the pit and so had escaped her fury. I had seen no farther in that maze of circumstance which lay behind and which had provided us with food and water and camels. I began to think of it.

When we had passed the expected oasis, and were on a trail over which a caravan had lately gone heading northward, and we and our camels and bottles had been refilled, we stopped, the beasts standing side by side. Apollo dismounted and examined the tracks in the sand and looked up at the sky. He knelt and prayed aloud to Jehovah, thanking Him for His Messenger, the new King, and for our deliverance from the powers of darkness. Then it was that I caught a glimmer of the light which will some day fill the world. It was, I think, in the trembling, impassioned voice

of my companion. He mounted, saying as we rode on:

"I think that we are in the great wilderness of Shur on our way to the sown lands in the north. There are many marches in the sands ahead. But now I know that our Shepherd is with us."

CHAPTER III

WE MEET A "LION OF ROME" AND GO UP TO JERUSALEM

AFTER many days we saw purple mountains on the far horizon and one morning we heard at dawn the sound of trumpets. It came from a Roman camp outside the magnificent city of Sela. We pressed on through the dark and narrow gorge known there as the Sik, beyond which is the plain whereon the city stands walled in by rose-colored mountains.

And without the city were the towered walls around the home of a desert legion of Tiberius Cæsar. We halted at its great gate. There Apollos told the guard that he wished to report to the general the misdoings of the Ishmaelites in the desert. We were told to wait while a soldier went in to convey the message. Through the wide-open portal I could see the level, clean, tented streets of the soldiers and the large wooden house of the general.

A group of lepers, a number of crippled men, and some that were blind sat outside the gate feeding on the refuse of the morning mess table. Apollos gave them the small remainder of our bread supply, now stale and bitter. Aside from them stood a bevy of painted tavern women, laughing and gossiping. One of these stood apart and was strangely beautiful. My companion spoke to all these people, saying :

"Ye forsaken ones, my heart burns for you. Know ye that the great Messiah of the Jews has come. He is

in Galilee. He cures the blind, the lame, and the sick and those possessed of demons."

The afflicted pressed upon us with many queries. Among them was the beautiful tavern girl.

An officer on a splendid black horse came galloping toward us through the gate—a handsome Roman youth with dark hair and eyes, in black blouse and helmet and high boots, his sword hanging from his belt. As they saw him, the children of misfortune scattered to their places.

The officer pulled up at the side of my companion. He looked at the Ishmaelite headdress and the Jewish cloak of Apollos and saw the leopard skin around his loins and said laughingly in the Latin tongue with which both Apollos and I were familiar:

"You are like Æsop's crow decorated with the feathers of other birds. Are you he who escaped from the desert pirates?"

"Most excellent officer of the Great Father, I am, and my name is Apollos from Gerasa," my friend answered.

"A Greek?"

"No, a Jew."

There was a note of contempt in the tone and manner of the young officer as he said: "My name is Vespasian. I am a centurion of the general's guard. He has sent me to ask for particulars."

Apollos began with this needed token of humility: "I am like the bramble speaking to the great tree."

"Bramble, go on," the officer urged impatiently.

Apollos told of what had befallen him and his father and me even to our deliverance from the lion's lair.

The centurion asked: "Did they slay many of you?"

"Many. Their arrows came so thick that they were like a flying shadow under the sun. Their prick was like the sting of the horned viper. Every one whose skin was cut suffered a quick and miserable death. I was the only man not touched, thanks to the one God."

The officer laughed, saying: "Your one God is very careful of you. I seek no news of Him. Try to tell me where in the great waste this thing happened, and where they took you."

This was no easy thing to do, and Apollos could tell little save that their retreat was near a mountain and that the river was more than a day's journey from there.

The centurion asked: "Do you think that we can find and stop these pirates of the great waste?"

He paused and looked at my companion and added: "I tell you that we shall find them when the lion eats straw. Never have I heard such a story. It beats the imaginings of Virgil. If I had your good fortune I should expect to be the Emperor of Rome."

He looked at me and rode to my side and I was afraid of him. He felt my bare arm and said:

"My sweet maid, from where come you?"

"From Pelusium," I answered, looking down and blushing.

"Your eyes are like those of the hind in the far north and your smile would make sunlight in the darkness. Where are you going?"

"I go with Apollos to Palestine. Then to my home."

Apollos spoke then, saying: "Her father was a Roman citizen. I return her to her people as worthy of their honor as when she left them."

The officer laughed. The sound of it hurt and offended me. He felt the tiny silver bottles on my wrist and said:

"You have the favor of the powers in the sky, my pretty maid. Give me one of these. I wish to keep it for a charm."

He put a number of silver coins in my hands. I unfastened the tiny silver bottle of musk and gave it to him, smiling as I said:

"Perhaps it will make you Emperor of Rome."

He answered: "Just now it would satisfy me to be emperor of your heart. When I smell this I shall long to see you again. Whither go you from here?"

"To Galilee," Apollos answered. "But we shall tarry a while with my friends in Jerusalem."

"I speak for Cæsar when I command you to report to me once in every month as to where you may be found. If we should chance to run upon these wolves of the desert, our general would have need of you."

He gave to each of us a little strip of vellum on which were written the words, "Vespasian, Tenth Legion, Sela."

We left him and rode on. I was glad to be going, for there was that in the look and manner of the Roman youth which threw a shadow on us, and we hurried to get out of it. My heart still trembled with its fear of him when Apollos said:

"These Romans remind me of the words of our prophet Jeremiah: 'They were as mad horses in respect of women; every one neighed after his neighbor's wife.' It is good to be traveling. My heart opened the door of his face and saw what was behind it."

We filled our bottles at a well in the city, and bought food with the money which the centurion had given me, and as we hurried on Apollos said:

"I smart under the insults which the haughty Roman heaped upon me and they have put me in mind of a saying of the great Nazarene at Capernaum: 'I say to you, love your enemies, do good unto those who treat you spitefully. If they smite you on one cheek, turn the other.' What else can we do? The Romans rule the world. They are irresistible. If we fight them, they will crush us under their feet. We can only overcome them with a spirit which has in it the light of Heaven. Soon or late may it not drive the darkness out of them? My pretty maid, at last I see the truth. It is like the rising of the sun after a night of terror in the desert."

I could but dimly comprehend him as he turned upon me, smiling. I noted a change in his countenance. Looking far down this winding pathway of the years, through light and darkness, I can still see the shining beauty of it. I know now that the grace of God had been poured upon his face. He added:

"You know it is written: 'He that ruleth his own spirit is *greater* than he that taketh a city.' It has come to me that the new King is not for the Jews alone but for your people and for all people, my sweet daughter of Hellas. Jeremiah has written that all the nations shall live in His shadow and call Him 'Christ the Lord,' and these are the words of Abraham: 'In Him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' It must be that He is for every one of the children of men."

This great thought was often on his lips as we

journeyed, and a new song came to him, full of joy, and he sang it loudly, and this was the burden of it:

Come, my beloved,
Let us go forth to the fields,
Let us be early in the vineyard.
The time of reaping is come,
And the time of singing.

We were hushed with fear in the twenty leagues of mountain country south of Beersheba, where dwelt the wildest sons of Ishmael, but no harm befell us, and one evening we saw ahead the familiar towers of Gaza against the sunset sky, and felt the grateful breath of the sea. The sight of it saddened me, for scarcely a year had passed since my father and I had been together there, our camels laden with rich treasure from Damascus.

And when we had come into the city in the place which is called "The Four Ways," we stopped by the great statue of Aphrodite which stood on a high stone base. Its form was that of a beautiful, naked woman. I had been told that all they of the city did honor unto it, especially women, for they said of it that it gave answer, in dreams to those who wished to be married, as to what was in store for them.

A number of young women were kneeling there kindling their lamps and burning incense. I could not resist the temptation to join them, so I dismounted and asked Apollos to bear with me, and went and knelt in their midst and prayed to the stone goddess that she would send me a dream.

I may say for myself that I was sorely in need of comfort those days, for I feared that Apollos would soon be leaving me. A cloud was on his face when

I returned. As we mounted and rode on toward the great caravansary near the northern edge of the city, he said to me:

"My little pagan! Why did you kneel to that heathen image?"

"My heart is troubled, knowing not what the future holds," I answered, and he reproved me with these gentle words:

"Poor soul! I would not add a straw's weight to your burden. I, too, am troubled. But it is on my heart to tell you that all graven images are an offense to the most high God. He has forbidden us to make them or to worship them. He is a jealous God."

I wondered at this and a fear came on me as we rode along.

"I did not know," I murmured. "What will He do to me?"

"Fear not, my child. The new King has said that He is like a good father, quick to understand and forgive. I think that He will only smile at your folly. The sin, if it be one, is mine. I should have instructed you in these things."

We slept in a cave of the caravansary with men and women and children on their way to Egypt. Coming out of the silent wilderness into a place where our ears were filled with the voices of men, the neighing and trampling of horses, and the roaring of camels, I was awake for hours listening. It was like pleasant music. It thrilled me and I thought it better than sleep, especially those human voices. I tried to catch every word in the babel of Greek, Aramaic, and foreign speech around me, for one theme was on

many tongues—the wonderful words and deeds of that Jesus of Nazareth, who was still in Galilee. There was a man who stood outside the cave and told over and over again how he had seen Him raise the dead and cure the most grievous afflictions. Soon came a caravan of pilgrims from Egypt, going up to the Feast of the Tabernacles at Jerusalem. Many of them came into our cave to sleep. I heard them speaking also of the new King.

Apollos lay beside me that night, and he whispered to me: "Little one, see you how His fame is traveling? I think by now it will be in Rome and along the great highways far north of it."

I slept and at daybreak, before one could know another for the darkness, I was awakened by the shouts of men and the complaining mutter of the big beasts of burden. The caravans were setting out, one to face the long desert marches, the other going to the great feast. I felt sorry for every man and woman heading toward the sands. The query had come to me as I lay in the cave: would I not better try to go back to Pelusium with these people? My heart grew sick at the thought of it. The desert and even my home was like the shadow of death and the sting of serpents. If I had had money to pay for my seat on the back of a camel and friends to travel with, I would not have gone to Egypt. The sandy marches and the haunting face of my stepmother, as cruel as they, filled me with a loathsome terror. One who has been whipped and robbed by the sirocco has a lasting dread of the great waste. And stronger than my fear was my love of Apollos. I could not bear the thought

of leaving him, being resolved that his God should be my God and that whither he went I would go, if possible.

We set out for Jerusalem, reaching, by and by, the fertile sea plain and the hills of the Shephelah. How grateful to our eyes the green floor of the plain and the scattered bloom! The summer being past, we saw only here and there the lingering gold of the broom and the red of the hollyhock and the white of the honeysuckle. The thistly herbs, loved by camels, halted our beasts, and we got down and let them eat their fill while we gathered blossoms and buried our faces in a cool, odorous sheaf of many colors.

We worked in a vineyard to get money, and after days of travel we reached the Roman highway leading up to Jerusalem. In its middle part was an elevated terrace made of gravel and cement on which the legions traveled and those bearing mandates from the emperor. On either side of this terrace were roads for the common people. There were posts every five or six miles, and at each of them many horses were stabled for the use of the legions and the friends and messengers of the emperor. There, too, were houses for rest and refreshment. As we neared the road a caravan was passing on its opposite side, laden with fruits and vegetables from the valley of the Jordan going west.

We ascended to the smooth, level surface of the eastbound side of the great highway. Far ahead we could see the dust and dimly discern the figures of a moving caravan. When we had come in sight of the first post we caught the thundering of many hoofs behind us. We faced about and saw a great troop

of horsemen coming at high speed on the middle part of the road. Lifted on the staffs of the front rank were the golden eagles of Rome gleaming in the sunlight. Then said Apollos:

"Behold! Solomon's palanquin, and threescore mighty men around it!"

They came with a flash and roar and a whirl of dust behind them, as comes the hurricane. When they drew near we saw in the midst of a troop a speeding chariot. Standing behind its rail were two men, one with the reins, in Roman patrician dress, their striped togas streaming behind them. Every horse was near spent and lathering under the lash. The dust and gravel from clattering hoofs sprinkled down upon us as they thundered by. Then shouted commands and a scurrying of men and horses in the post ahead. The suddenness of the halt seemed to catapult every man from his horse; but he landed on his feet and ran forward to the new mount just ahead of him. In the twinkling of an eye fresh horses were on the chariot. It dashed forward, the troopers now up and off and streaming around it, while the jaded beasts were being led to their stables.

"It is our governor, the haughty Pontius Pilate," said Apollos as we journeyed on. "Perchance he has been to Capræ to confer with the emperor. Long since it came to me that the old fox Tiberius would be worried by this talk of a new king in our land. He will not like this stirring and boiling of the Jewish pot. I have heard it said by men who have been to Rome that he is a shag-haired, dirty-mouthed, rammish old churl. The wags call him Callipides, because he is ever planning journeys which he never makes. It

is a saying of his, and one of the few truths he ever uttered, that the officials of the Roman provinces are like flies on a sore but that those sated with blood do not suck so hard as newcomers. That is why he is slow in changing governors."

We had enough silver left to buy some bread and meat at the post, and we went on, knowing that Jerusalem was only a few hours ahead of us.

"We shall reach the Holy City near the end of the Feast of the Tabernacles," said Apollos. "Pilgrims from every land will be there. We shall reach it soon after the night falls and see the Great Light. It shines for the heathen."

And I said that I hoped it would enter my soul and light my way to a better faith.

"By the glory of God! It is a thing to remember," he went on. "When you look back to this day, though your years are as those of Methuselah, you will see the shining of the Great Light."

We passed a procession of Romans, probably nobles, traveling in litters, borne by slaves, and escorted by soldiers with torches in their hands.

It is no easy thing to tell of those moments when, having left the highway to gain a vantage point, we stood on the Mount of Olives and looked across a deep valley through the darkness of the fallen night and saw the vast, magnificent Temple, its white walls and vines of wrought gold and marble columns and shimmering gates aglow in the light of the great candelabras that hung in the Court of the Women and in the flickering flames of ten thousand torches. The sound of silver trumpets and of mystic hymns floated through the intervening darkness to our ears. As

vividly as that great picture pool of light in the darkness, I remember the words of Apollos:

"Now have we seen the splendor of Heaven. The sounds are like odors blown out of the gardens of paradise."

I was trembling and my lips were dumb. At the gates of the great city this vision of grandeur had overcome me. I felt very little and was afraid.

"Behold the weakness of my people," said Apollos as we journeyed on. "They are too much concerned with the outside of the cup. I could wish that they were seeking the spirit of Heaven rather than its splendor. It came to me in Galilee that the true light is that of the spirit of God, not that of candles and torches shining on golden robes and marble walls and columns."

As we came up a steep way into the city, we caught the odor of the burning flesh of beasts.

"I can see and smell the smoke of the sacrifice," said Apollos. "Seventy bullocks will be slaughtered by the priests for the altar fires. They symbolize the seventy nations of the heathen world. I think it a waste of good flesh. Mind you, my pretty maid, there are those here who would stone me to death if they heard me say it."

We entered by the Damascus gate where ended the long Roman highway from the north. The streets were thronged. Never had I seen such a multitude of beggars and cripples and peddlers of small wares, and Apollos told me that these were only they who had been turned away from the Temple on account of the press.

Booths had been erected in the streets and squares

and courts and on the city walls and the housetops, for the accommodation of the vast multitude of pilgrims. They were made of tent cloth or of wood, and many of them were decked with leafy boughs to remind those who lodged there of the goodly land unto which they had come after many days in the wilderness. Apollos told me that at least a million Jews came from distant lands to this great harvest festival.

At a turn in the street we climbed a hill and halted at a door in the curving masonry. Apollos pulled the latchstring and opened the door and called. A little dark-haired, dark-eyed woman came out, bearing a lighted lamp. My friend took the lamp and embraced and kissed her, saying:

"My beloved! Your door is as the gate of heaven, and your face like that of an angel."

"May God lengthen your days, Apollos!" she exclaimed. "Whence come you?"

"From the desert and many perils."

"Come in, my dear one. The house and all that I own is yours."

"I regret that it is impossible," said Apollos, it being the way of the Jews to decline an invitation when it is first given.

She urged: "I swear by my love of you and the life of God, that I shall be the unhappiest of women if you do not let me lodge and feed you as long as you will stay. Have you forgotten the bread and salt we have had together?"

"Anna, my treasure, you remind me of pleasant things," he answered. "For a night we shall be glad to sleep under your roof and taste your bread and salt again."

A maidservant came and took the camels away,

having been assured that they were as gentle as lambs.

Then the woman turned and embraced me and said:

"Your wife is as beautiful as the daughters of Hanan. I think that her mouth is for kisses and not for words."

That because of my silence, and he answered: "My beloved, this cherished one is weary and afraid. She has never seen a great city until now. She is not my wife; she is a young Greek and a convert to our faith, whom I rescued from robber Ishmaelites in the desert. You have not seen my wife. She is waiting for me in Gerasa of Galilee, I hope. Have you heard naught of her?"

And Anna answered: "Not a word have I heard of her."

"Then I think that all is well," was the answer of my friend.

As we entered the one large room of the house, our hostess offered to bring us food, and Apollos said:

"We shall need no food. We are fasting until to-morrow. Let us recline here while I tell you of great things."

The stone floor was covered with rugs and cushions and blankets of dyed fur. We lay on the rugs and cushions while Apollos told of the mighty prophet in Capernaum, and of the light and honor which had come to him at the door of a fisherman of the name of Peter. He told also of meeting me in the camp of the Ishmaelites and of all that had befallen us. I observed that the woman sat erect and swayed her body and seemed to be whispering a prayer as we went on, and when he had finished she came and kissed his brow and exclaimed:

"What a blessed day is this that has shown me the light of your countenance! You are one of us. Thanks to the most high God!"

"Anna, my beloved aunt!" said Apollos, "have you seen Him and felt His power?"

"Yes, I and Marsitas and his wife and children, who are friends of mine, journeyed to Capernaum and heard His preaching and saw His mighty deeds. We went intending to remain only a day. We stayed on and on, seven days we were there, and when we came away it seemed as if He came with us."

"You have the open mind. You are my mother's sister. We are not like those contented rulers who believe that the last word of God's truth has been spoken."

And the woman answered: "The rulers! They now seek to slay Him, because He healed a man on the Sabbath. They claim that He is breaking down the law of Moses. Even those who follow Him are in danger. Marsitas and his wife and I have been warned not to go to the Temple because we are known to be among His followers."

"Was it not they who murdered the prophets?" said Apollos. "Was it not they of whom the Lord spoke through the tongue of Isaiah?—'This people honoreth me with their lips but their heart is far from me!' We are like the tortoise creeping about in a thick shell of law. We can make no progress. The soul of man hath need of wings and not of a shell. Are we forever to be content with the words of Solomon: 'The thing which shall be it is that which hath been already of old time'? Are we always to be ruled by Herods and Pilates and Hanans? With all our law we know not justice or security. Any man who dares

to stick his head out of his shell and express an idea will feel a sword upon it."

"Be of good cheer," the woman answered. "The new King hath the power of God. He will deliver us."

"But not with the sword," Apollos went on. "He seeks to build up a nation in which men may live at peace, as brothers, under a kind and fatherly God."

The words that came from his lips a moment later have lived with me. And this is what he said:

"Our new King will not escape them. He shall be slain. But His spirit shall live and some time possess the earth, if His followers do but stand firm and fear not the little thing we call death."

The woman Anna was swaying her body and moaning, her hands over her face. I, too, was stricken with the black fear. I had begun to know that it was a heavy matter to take upon me the faith of Apollos.

"I do not wish to die," I said. And covering my face, I whispered a prayer to the favorite god of my own people.

"Have no fear, my beloved," Apollos continued. "It is good tidings that I give you. No one will need to perish unless he is given courage from on high. If so, he will feel it an honor and a joy. Tell me, has the mighty Nazarene come up to Jerusalem?"

The woman answered: "He is here and is teaching daily in the Temple. This day I saw Him on the east side of the Porch of Solomon and around Him was such a press of people that I could only hear His voice. Among them were many Pharisees who set up a peevish clamor and were quickly thrust out of the crowd of listeners. Their faces were black with anger as they went away. 'The man should be slain,' they

muttered. 'He would have us render homage to Cæsar.' A friend told me that spies of the High Priest are ever near Him, hearkening to turn His words into blasphemy. It is said that He eats with publicans and sinners, and consorts with ignorant fisher folk, and that He has around Him the dregs and outcasts of the world. I am told that the wealthy Sadducees are plotting His destruction and that He would have been slain before now but for the multitude of His followers."

Apollos answered: "The Sadducees! I know them. They think only of their own happiness and security and hold to things as they are. They live in fine houses. They eat, drink, and are merry. Their God is in their bellies. The law is in their hands, and the poor dare not complain. Nobody's life or property is secure but theirs. *He* proclaims the truth and pities the poor and calls for justice. The rich Sadducees are fearful, seeing the crowds that follow Him. Of course they want Him out of their way."

All these are the words that came to my half-pagan ears the night of my arrival at the little house of Anna in Jerusalem. I treasured them in my memory because they had been spoken by Apollos or were in answer to his speaking, and my memory was strong to hold even his lightest words, and in the silence of the night I was wont to repeat them and pray to the one God to give me understanding.

Next day Anna and I went to the Temple with Apollos. I was afraid; but I should have had a greater fear staying with her and her spindles at home; namely, that some evil would befall him and I not near to avert it or to give him help and comfort.

We set out early. Even then the dense crowd was like a slow-flowing river filling and washing its shores. We drifted, not faster than a beetle's crawling, in that gayly colored throng of pilgrims, many of whom were from the far sides of the world, all Jews returning to the ancient altars of their faith. Never have I had such a sense of the innumerable host of the living as when I looked before and behind me at those children of the one God flowing down the slants under stone arches and up a steep slope and down to the Temple area.

And one thought was in the many minds around us, and leaping from one to another. Had the new King really come, and was their deliverance at hand? There were those who were saying: "No, He has not come. The man from Nazareth is a learned, cunning sorcerer, who defies the law of Moses. What, a prophet from Nazareth!—a remote, rustic village!—in the half-pagan land of Galilee!—insulting the most high God with its Greek images and temples! Nazareth is a good place to go for plows and plowboys and ox yokes, but who would look for a prophet in such a village?"

And soon a loud and bitter contention arose near us between those who had put their faith in Him and those who had not, and Apollos was minded to take a part in it, but we prevailed upon him to hold his peace. Like whirlpools of agitation, indicated by loud words and uplifted, shaking hands, here and there, broke the quiet flow of the human tide before and behind us.

Suddenly a hush fell upon those ahead. They had passed the hilltop and their eyes beheld the great

earthly throne of their God. The vastness and the splendor of it were speaking to them and each man and woman became as he that heareth only the whisper of his own spirit. My eyes have seen the mighty things of this world, but never the like of that, for it rose and spread like a mountain with snowy peaks, its upper walls being of exceeding whiteness. Its gate toward which we looked was fifty cubits high and covered with gold. An immense, Babylonian curtain, embroidered with blue and purple and scarlet, hung over its doors. The lofty lintels of polished white stone held a golden vine, wrought by the most skillful craftsmen, with branches hanging down from a great height. There were many of these high, glowing gates, and the two outward faces of the Temple, now visible as we streamed down the slope, were adorned with immense plates of solid gold.

Roman soldiers checked the press of people at the gate. We entered. Within the outer court were tables for traffic and animals for sale and the din of much bargaining. Priests were slaying for the sacrifice, near a wall of the court. Beautiful to look upon were the vast colonnades and cloisters, and the gated courts rising one above another.

We made our way to a point near the eastern gate, to see the morning procession from the Pool of Siloam. It came, by and by, led by priests in long, blue, silken robes, fringed with golden bells and held by girdles embroidered with threads of gold and purple and scarlet. One of them carried the golden pitcher filled at the pool to celebrate, as Apollos explained to me, the giving of water to the thirsty land.

We wished to see the God-sent Prophet, but were unable to reach the Porch of Solomon. At the ceremonial of the outpouring of the water and wine, which occurred in a great chamber, we heard a trumpet from the walls of Heaven—His voice, ringing clear—or rather was it a strain of music so triumphant and beautiful that every mouth opened with astonishment so that even the priests at the altar were silent, for the thirst it spoke of was a part of the history of the Jews.

They had known the dry tongue in the great waste, and for generations they had been feeling the mighty thirst of the spirit for better things. Now, looking backward, I think that the power of God came whirling out of the skies like a mighty wind, in those words of the Great Shepherd. I kept them in my heart, even when I was not able to understand them, for the sake of their beauty, and later they were to me as a fountain in the desert, filling me with their inexhaustible fullness.

That trumpet strain was not alone for the multitude in the great four-walled Temple of Jerusalem. It was for all the children of men who shall come to this azure-walled, fair-floored, star-roofed temple of the ages, through which the generations are forever passing. Other like words I have heard, from the same lips and from those of Stephen and the blessed Paul, but none so dear to me, knowing as I do the longing of the swollen tongue. And here are the words, each of which fell like a hammer on a golden bell in the silence:

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on me as the Scripture hath said: 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

CHAPTER IV

ON THE EDGE OF DEEP WATERS

THE great feast ended. The pilgrims were streaming out of the city to begin their homeward journeys. After watching them go, Anna and I returned to our little, dark house. I had found it an irksome place after living so long in the sunlit, open air of the wilderness. This one was ever filled with the odor of boiling herbs and within it was an endless twilight. Apollos returned from a night in the small village east of the Mount of Olives, where in the house of one Lazarus he had met the Prophet. His face had a solemn look.

"I have been hearing mighty things," he said. "I fear that evil days are coming to our people in the Holy City. The priests of the Temple and the rulers are as those without eyes or ears. The love of ease and power and gold has shut them away from the truth. They say that the teaching of our Master is a blasphemy; that only the ignorant, common herd will listen to it. They plan to slay Him. He sees in His vision a time when Jerusalem shall be destroyed. He has said that the number that shall perish in those days will be so many that no man living or dead has heard of the like of it."

I was frightened, and Anna moaned with her face against the wall of the room, saying: "Oh, God of our fathers! I think that our unhappy people shall know no peace save that of the dead."

"Be not afraid, my beloved ones," said Apollos. "Those evil days are not for us to see or for any if we can but soften the hearts and open the minds of these great people who feel above their God because He loves the poor and the friendless.

"Think of these little, butterfly folk, with such a filthy pride in them that the Son of God is not fit to enter their houses. Their religion is thus a proven failure, their life a stench of hypocrisy. He has found them with the golden cup of Babylon at their lips and they must put it away or they shall reap the whirlwind."

Then said Anna: "Our new King must redeem us with a greater miracle than we have seen. He must cause Rome to give to Him the crown that Herod wore and the help of the legions. Then the rulers will bend their knees to Him."

Apollos laughed. "If He gave to Hanan and his friends the whole world on a golden platter, it would avail Him nothing. He would have, also, to give them new souls. Think of putting a new soul in Tiberius Cæsar! Not even our great Master can give a new soul to any man who does not honestly repent and desire the gift. If Jesus wore the crown, Cæsar would still be Cæsar, Hanan would be Hanan, Caiaphas would be Caiaphas, and the God-sent One would have to be a tool in their hands or quickly perish."

"What are we to do?" The query came in a little cry of despair from the soul of Anna.

And Apollos answered: "Let us do what we can to save our people. This day I shall be leaving you."

My heart was in such a flutter that I reeled and nearly fell. Then I composed myself and asked:

"Whither go you?"

"To Gerasa to find my wife and to work in the vineyard of my Master. There is much to be done."

I asked: "May I go with you, and help you?"

"O lily of Hellas! The road will be long without you," he answered. "At last a day has come when the law of God turns me away from you and the feet of our camels go no more in the same path."

How strong were those Jews—even the most scornful of the Pharisees—to obey the law. Ages of travel over the desert sands had had its part in their schooling. I wonder not that they were the chosen people. Taking note of the dejected look of me, he added: "My beloved Anna will be your mother and friend."

If I had been turned into stone that moment, the world would have no better statue of a sorrowing maiden. I had no right to love him, and yet how could I help it? He was my only friend, and had been to me a gentle shepherd. A thought of the bitterness of life, and with it a strange calmness, came upon me, and I asked: "Shall I see you no more?"

He answered: "My pretty maid, you are like a green bush covered with roses in the garden of our Master. Am I not appointed to be your friend? If you need my help, it shall be yours. My aunt will share her home and bread with you. Do what you can to help her. You will find good friends in Jerusalem among the many followers of our new King."

That day we rode our camel to the market where Apollos offered the beast for sale. I have never forgotten the curious bantering that followed the naming of the price.

"On my head, I would not pay the half of it for such a beast," said the prospective buyer.

"Then I swear by the altar of my faith that you shall not have him," Apollos answered. And the buyer added:

"May God cut off my bread, if I think him not the oldest camel I have seen since the last harvest moon."

"Then buy him for his wisdom, for you have need of it," said my friend.

Apollos turned the camel about to find another buyer, whereupon the man paid the money and took the beast. Such was the way of buying and selling in the market place those days. The money was turned over to me. With that I was to provide myself with garments fit for the new life I had entered upon. After that was done it was thought that I would have a goodly sum for my purse.

When we parted, Apollos took my right hand in both of his and his words have been like a songbird in my heart: "My sweet comrade of the long trails! I once had a shapely Grecian urn filled with rose leaves. It was as white as the snows of Hermon. It will always be in my memory."

His lips trembled as he kissed my brow, and we went with him to the Damascus gate. There he stopped and said to me: "I may return to you. But be not as the sparrow sitting alone upon the housetop. Let your heart and hands be busy in the great task."

We stood watching his beloved form until he was out of sight on his homeward journey. Then there fell upon us a shadow of despair and loneliness. And in its gloom I lost the playful heart of girlhood and found it not again.

I had not the thrift of the Jews, and in the market place my money vanished like the dew of the morning; for I had a great love of silk and fine linen.

To our home that evening came Marsitas and his wife, Herodia by name, and many who had put their faith in the mighty One from the north, and a great number of His sayings were repeated there. Each had a story to tell of His power to heal the sick and the lame and the blind. They were simple, hard-working folk from the shops and the market places, who sat around us that evening.

Among them was a woman, come down to the feast from Nazareth. She had spent her life in that village under the hills, and she told us of Joseph and Mary and their God-sent Son. He had been a silent, friendly, industrious lad, who had acquired a famous skill in the carpenter shop of His father. He studied much and as a youth His wisdom and learning were beyond His years, so that the talk of it traveled to Nain and Cana and beyond, and many came to see Him from distant places. In His leisure He had been wont to wander over the hills and look down upon the great roads leading to the land's ends. There He had seen the long caravans, from the north and the valley of the Jordan, laden with treasure, and the legions and litters of Rome coming up from the azure sea in the west, across the Plain of Esdraelon. There at His feet He had seen the wide world passing to and fro. He had loved to wander away in the springtime when the hillsides and the plain were floored with many-colored flowers.

"It was no strange thing," the woman declared, "when He came back from Capernaum to His own

people, telling of the great truth which had come to Him in His absence, that they should say, as they did, 'Is not this the carpenter's Son? Is not His mother, Mary? And do we not know His brothers and His sisters? Whence, then, hath this man all these things?'

"And many were offended, also, because He rebuked them for their lack of understanding even of the law of Moses."

We sang and prayed, chiefly for understanding and courage and the true light, and agreed to meet every Sabbath and bring as many as we could find of a like faith. We met, here and there, in the houses of our friends until such a number joined us that we had to meet in groves and gardens beyond the city walls. A wealthy Pharisee of the name of Jonas had confessed our faith, and there were those among us who spoke with that power which is a gift from the Holy Spirit, and hope grew in us that we should win the city in time, for news was ever coming down from the north of the wonderful deeds and sayings of our Master and many who had been in doubt were turning our way.

Now, we had not been blind to our danger from the spies of Hanan and his priests, and our words were chosen with care. One midweek night we were sitting around a blazing fire of wood in an empty fold of the gentle giant, Marsitas.

He was a husbandman forty years of age, who lived about two furlongs beyond the city walls in the west. He had compassion for my loneliness and spoke cheering words to me and was wont to call me "Child of the Morning."

This big, bearded giant was, like Samson and the mighty men of old of whom Apollos had told me on our journeys, famed for his great strength. It was said that he could carry ten sacks of corn to the city market on his back.

When we went to his home we found him always playing with his children. Often five or six of them would be riding on his shoulders and his outstretched arms. When I think of his home I hear the laughter of children and merry words. His wife, Herodia, was a slight, dark-eyed, sweet-faced woman, who knew by heart the Psalter and the books of Solomon and was familiar with all the Scriptures. She had, also, a noble and convincing gift of speech.

Herodia was talking to many people who sat in the glow of the firelight in the great fold of Marsitas that evening, when a crowd of armed men suddenly leaped over its wall and fell upon us. We were like the little army of Josiah surrounded by the hosts of Pharaoh in the Vale of Megidden.

Herodia and the younger children who clung to her side were slain. Marsitas fell severely wounded in defending her, but not until he had done great damage with his empty hands to certain of the raiders. Those of us who were able to leap over the wall did so and ran away in the darkness. This I did, after my friend Anna had been run through with a spear at my side. How many were slain I know not. I wandered about in the darkness, weeping, and hid among bushes in a hollow, like one of a flock scattered by wolves. Through lack of understanding my new faith had quickly left me and again I was praying to Apollo. The

one God who suffered such evil to fall upon His friends was not for me, I thought.

Now there was one figure among those who fell upon us in that moment of terror which I remembered. Even as I write, after all these years, I see him in the firelight as clearly as if he stood in my open door—a short, stout youth, with uplifted hand, shouting to his fellows in a voice now familiar:

“Slay no more. Enough blood has been shed.”

Then the strong hand of Marsitas had hurled him to the earth.

Later in the night I came out of my hiding place, shivering, for a frost had fallen and the ground was white around me. I saw a lighted gate of the city not far away, and walked toward it.

As I entered the gate my heart shook with a new terror, for I knew that evil men would be abroad in the streets. Soon a party of drunken youths came along and sought to lay hands upon me. I ran before them, closely followed. A little way beyond I saw a great house and light streaming out of its open door. Within were many voices and the music of a lyre. I ran through its door, calling for help. The owner of the house, a tall, bearded man with a kindly voice, came and put his hands upon my shoulders and said:

“My pretty maid, who are you? And what has befallen you?”

“Oh, good sir,” I said, “have mercy upon me. I have been a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, and to-night at the home of Marsitas my friends have been slain and scattered. I ran away unhurt and evil men are seeking to do me harm.”

Every day in all these years of my life I have not failed to thank the Lord for Nicodemus, the rich Pharisee. It was his home that I had entered. Whether the Lord had turned my feet to its door, I do not venture to say. The great man's guests had gathered about me.

"She has a well-born face and figure," said one.

"And fine raiment," another declared.

"I think that she is a Greek," said a stern-faced woman, and thereupon these gracious words came from the man of the house:

"To me it matters not whether she is a Jew or a Gentile. She is one of a number of well-meaning people who have suffered a great wrong."

He turned to me and added: "Little one, fear not. I shall protect you. Tell us whence you come and who you are."

Then, put to the test, my mind ran back into the fold of the Great Shepherd, being reassured by the fatherly man at my side.

"I am a Greek, converted to your faith," I answered.

Some turned away, I remember, grunting with proud disdain, and would not hear me.

"Tell us how came it?" said the kindly Nicodemus.

And then and there, for the first time, while many listened, I told the strange tale of my misfortune and friendships as they are set down, but more briefly. And when I had finished, Nicodemus said:

"I have talked with this Jesus of Nazareth and, verily, I believe Him a teacher come from God."

He looked at me with curiosity in his face, adding: "Are you indeed one of those born again according to His word? How did it happen?"

"Sir, not yet have I felt the great mystery of being born again," I answered sadly.

Then said Nicodemus: "It is beyond my comprehension. When I saw Him it was at night and the wind was blowing. He said wonderful things to me. His face was like that of an angel and His voice like the sound of yon lyre. I cannot forget the look of Him or the words He spake, and I asked Him how could a man be born again?"

"And He said, 'Listen to the wind in the treetops. You know not whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.'"

There were those in that company who sought to make a jest of these words, but the rabbi rebuked them, saying that it was a question as to whether all the great prophets had known the mystery of a second birth.

Under his roof I spent what remained of the night, and next morning he took me to a school of industry for young, dependent, Jewish girls, under the patronage of a band of wealthy Pharisees, known as The Sons of the Temple. I became a student in the school and stayed through the winter and learned the art of weaving.

I knew not where news of the ill fortune which had come upon Anna and me would reach Apollos. The good Nicodemus had kindly offered to send word to him through a rabbi in Gerasa. Anna's brother, a strict Pharisee who would have no word with me, had taken possession of her home.

Being born a Gentile, I was despised and even spat upon by certain of my mates, and with them I had many a bitter quarrel. Only the younger ones were

my friends, for their souls were not yet soiled by the taught hatred of pagan races. I remember how, sitting at the looms, the little ones would smile at me, and those near my own age had a look in their eyes that seemed to say: "You Greek dog! Stop looking at me."

I was lonely and longing for friendship, but I had only children to talk and play with—those who were as God had made them. But soon they suffered a remaking at the hands of their elders, and then even they would have little to say to me.

Now, I had made two reports at the Tower of Antonia, addressed to the centurion in the legion at Sela, as he had commanded; and one day he rode into the school grounds on his black horse, in the grand dress of a tribune, and called for me. He said in the Roman tongue that my talisman had brought him good luck, for which he thanked me, and kissed my hand. Then he spoke words too welcome, alas! after all I had suffered.

"Oh, beautiful one, beloved of Apollo!" so spake the fair youth. "You have walked in my dreams and filled them with the light of your countenance. I heard of you at the tower, and here I find you penned up with a lot of ill-born Jewish cats who, I doubt not, hate the ground your feet have touched. I love you. Come with me. If I had you for a wife and a friend, I think that I should, indeed, be Emperor of Rome."

"It cannot be. I am a follower of Jesus of Nazareth," I answered.

"I have heard of Him. Does He forbid you to love or to marry?"

"No, but I must work for Him, and if I were the wife of a Roman, I would need be His enemy."

"Not at all. I swear by the beard of Cæsar—and it is a long one—that you may choose whom you will for a God, if only you will choose me for a friend."

"But I could not love you."

"Why not? Am I so ill looking?"

"No, but my heart is given to another."

"It is that Æsop's crow who came out of the desert with you. I like him not—a Jew!"

"I think him the noblest man in the world," I said.

"And if I find him, he will be one of the dearest. He has failed to report to me. He has disobeyed the law of Cæsar."

"You are ill informed. I went with him to the tribune in the tower."

To this he made no answer, but said: "Think of this, my beautiful one. You shall have money and jewels and a fine house and many friends. I will see you again."

Then he rode away. I doubt not the wily Roman knew that his coming there would increase my trouble, and it did. My mates and even my teacher put "the Ban" upon me. Nobody spoke to me. Nobody seemed to see me. I came and went from my bed and bread like an unseen spirit among the living. I was as one dead. Nothing could sooner break the heart of a sensitive, young girl. I was being ground between the millstones of hatred and resentment. Like Jeremiah, my eyes failed with tears, but they were unnoticed. Despair was behind me, pressing hard, and beauty and wealth and ease and comfort were

before, urging me on. Such is the way of Satan, I have found.

In the midst of these trials, a woman I recognized came into the school yard where I was walking alone. She was one of our little band who had lived through the massacre in Marsitas's fold. She was like a listed ship, half sunken, but afloat and slowly drifting. One side of her had been paralyzed in the shock and terror of the raid. She hobbled with a crutch.

She said that Marsitas had lost his reason and was wandering in the hills and that his children who were spared had been sent to his brother in Gaza.

When she was leaving she whispered: "I am one of the friends of Apollos who have been searching every corner of the city. Be of good cheer, my beloved, you shall see him soon."

Now I knew not that in these bitter days Apollos had come to Jerusalem and had been vainly seeking me, having learned that his wife had died in his absence.

I was overjoyed, but suddenly a great fear came upon me. I watched the gate and was ready to go, knowing that the school authorities were eager to be rid of me. That very day an Arab came to the gate leading a splendid Bactrian camel. He beckoned to me and I ran to his side and he said: "Mount, and I will take you to your lover." The great beast knelt, and in a moment I was on his back with the Arab and going I knew not whither.

CHAPTER V

IN THE EDGE OF THE DEEP

I WAS taken, not to the side of my beloved comrade of the long trails, but to the Tower of Antonia, where a squad of cavalry under the young Vespasian was waiting for me.

He rode to my side and said: "My sweet-faced, noble-hearted one! Be not afraid. No harm shall come to you. It is necessary that you should go with us to the great camp of the desert legion as a witness against certain bandit chiefs soon to have their trial."

"Sir, what happens to me is of little moment," I answered out of a heart already broken. "But I implore you, in the name of the most high God and by your love of justice and honor between men, that you do no harm to Apollos. Where is he?"

"He is a prisoner at Cæsarea," the youth answered.

"If you do not release him, I shall hate you as long as I live."

"No harm shall come to him, little one, so long as he keeps away from you and obeys the law. He is a turbulent Jew and is one of many who have been making trouble in Samaria."

The trumpets sounded and our journey began.

Now I am as one taking hot bread out of an oven. I do it quickly, with the holder in my hands. I have come to memories full of the serpent's guile. They burn me when I touch them, yet here they are in the

straight way I have chosen. There must be no turning. I was in the power of Rome, harder to resist in the palace than on the battlefield and I was a young and friendless maiden.

The handsome tribune was no "rough-handed, ill-bred, Roman dog," according to the gossip of my time and city. He was gentle and witty and merry-hearted; a kindly and entertaining companion, a merry and brilliant youth, an able soldier, respected by his fellow officers and a darling of the ranks. What honor was beyond his reach—and what dishonor?

He wished me to believe that he was fond of me, and for a time I cherished that belief, not knowing that a haughty Roman never spoke his mind to a Greek save in contempt or anger. He bribed me with the promise that my lover should be released and safely conducted to his own city and soon came the day when I could see his heart as if it were in a house of glass. Then I despised him. I could not have given him my love, even if he had cared for so poor a treasure and could have put a crown upon my head. And I think it a mystery that honor and wealth were no more to me than the sand of the desert. Yet those were the days when, in the judgment of this world, honor was the thing of which I had the greatest need.

I have seen men scourged until their backs were swollen in broken ridges and their feet stood in their own blood, and always the scourge has put me in mind of the caresses of the young Roman and of others which were to follow. These late years, the truth has come to me that I was then as truly a martyr as I shall be when at last the tyrant in Rome has worked his will upon me, for my soul had not submitted.

Such a condition of mental inharmony could not continue. He wearied of my indifference. Of my own weariness I am loath to speak, being a lover of happiness. We are nearing the top of the range, and there will be cold wind enough on the other side of it.

I had a house and slaves to serve me in the near city. But Vespasian would never gratify my wish to be dressed like a grand lady. He liked me better in simple dress like that I had worn coming out of the desert. He would have it that fine linen and jewelled slippers were not for me. But this was the least of our differences. I hated his false heart; and one day after I had spoken words that cut to the quick, the young tribune lost patience and said in passion that he had had enough of me, and that I could go my way back to the Jews.

"I ask only for a camel, and the child," I said.

"You shall have both, and money for your purse," he answered.

So on a camel's back, with my little son not quite a year old, I set out from Sela, going I knew not whither. I thought of Apollos, my friend and comrade of the long trails. It was like a blast from the snowy heights of the Belka, for while he was often in my thoughts, he had gone out of my life hopelessly and forever, it seemed to me. Yet a sense of injustice swelled my heart as I brooded over my loss. The one God and His new Prophet had served me ill. I prayed to Apollo.

As I rode on, the tainted money of Rome rattled in my purse. I took it in my hands and looked at the many pieces of silver and gold and was about to throw

it away in anger, when the face of the sleeping child in my lap stayed my hand.

Lying with the money was a folded sheet of vellum which bore these words:

To post and inn keepers on any Roman highway and to all others, I commend the lady who bears this note, and request that she have hospitality suited to a friend of

VESPASIAN,

Tribune of the Tenth Legion,
Sela.

I went in the trail which Apollos and I had traveled. It was dear to me. I found entertainment at the inns and caravansaries where I had rested in those blessed marches when my heart was filled with its great hope. I seemed to love its sadness, and words and incidents which I have not mentioned in my small account of that journey now loomed to commanding magnitude.

Here we had rested in the shadow of a great rock and taken food. In that rest he first told me of the wonders of Jerusalem. There was a shepherd's cave where we had found shelter, and I recalled how we sat at its entrance in the twilight while he jested with the shepherds and sang to them. And one of these, an old man, had told of hearing a great song in the sky, when he was bringing in his flock from the hills near Bethlehem of Judea, the night that the Great One was born, in the time of Herod the King. And he had said to us:

"I went to the cave where He lay and saw the shining light of His countenance. Oh, it was wonderful to behold! And a new spirit came to me, and I began to know the deep things of God. Before I die I hope to see my people delivered."

And Apollos had answered: "He will not deliver them, but He hath shown them how to deliver themselves if they will."

The day was near its end when I passed that familiar spot. The child was sleeping and I rode on through the night, for many thoughts crowded into my mind and among them was not one of rest. Riding under the stars, it would seem that I slept as one sleeps in the saddle, the body still faithful to its task. For I dreamed that I had come to a beautiful city and that there I met Apollos and saw no anger in his face when he kissed me and took my child in his arms and as I wept he said to me: "My beloved! Think you that I know not what you have suffered?"

I awoke, and then it was that the resolution came to me that I would go to Apollos and, day by day, the hope grew strong in my soul that he was a man great enough to understand and to forgive me. Thereafter I went on with a better heart, knowing my destination, and again praying to the one God and His mighty Prophet.

I went not to Gaza, for it came to pass that I fell in with a caravan going due north through the Desert of the Wandering to Beersheba. In it were many good people from the northern coasts and the valley of the Jordan, who made me welcome in their midst.

Among them was a blind man, of the name of Bartimæus, who had spent his all going to Egypt to be healed by a great physician and was returning to his home in the lower river valley, penniless and as blind as when he left it. He and his daughter rode on the camel of a kindly Jewish trader and were eating from

his store of food. Their story touched my heart and I gave them half of the contents of my purse.

Now, of all the prayers that I ever uttered, I reckon that to be the best—the one in which I spoke not with words but with generosity and sacrifice. I make no boast of it since I got more with the giving than money could have bought for me—a sense of peace and joy which I had not known before.

When I left the unfortunate ones, within sight of the white pinnacles and golden splendors of the Temple, they kissed my hands and called down the blessing of God upon me and my child. I feared the great city of the Jews, and turned away from it. I had felt and seen enough of its cruelty. So I journeyed northward through the high hills and deep vales of Judea, along the Roman highway, spending the three nights on my journey into Galilee at the posts.

Darkness overtook me on the first march of that journey, and a troop of cavalry bearing torches flashed by under streaming flames, a picture of which I have loved to think. I was soon to learn that they had captured two bandits and were taking them to the fortress at Jotapata.

Soon I overtook a litter, its escort bearing spears that gleamed in the light of their torches. No doubt it was occupied by great people, for there was near a score of footmen and outriders.

I saw these mighty nobles at the post ahead. The officer in charge and his helpers knelt and kissed their knees, for they were Caius of the house of Cæsar and his lady—the first great lady I had seen, with painted lips and cheeks and curled hair and jeweled ears and

neck and wrists and fingers. Her jewels and her purple robe shone in the light of the torches. She reminded me of the rainbowed mist of a waterfall touched by sunlight, as I gazed upon her. The sweetest perfume of Arabia was shaken from the folds of her robe as she walked. I could have spent a day of joy looking at that young woman. She smiled at me as she passed.

Having learned from the officer in charge that I was a friend of young Vespasian, tribune of the Desert Legion, she came to see me in my room. I knelt and kissed her knees.

"You are from old Hellas," she said.

"How know you that?" I asked.

"By your beautiful head and figure. I, too, am a Greek—well born like you. Since I left Rome I have not seen a woman to chatter with. I am weary of men. Let us sit down together."

She pointed at my child and asked: "Who is this?"

"My child," I answered.

"Vespasian?"

"Yes."

"Oh, these Romans! I knew his father in Reate of the land of the Sabines, a stingy old money lender. I hope the young man is not like him."

We talked a while together. They were going to Tiberius for the baths. When she was leaving she told me that her name was Thamyris, and she gave this warning: "Do not let the young lion I travel with see you. He was whelped in the house of Cæsar and is a peril to beautiful women. Keep in your room until we are off."

I did as she bade me, and when they were gone I learned that Caius in a bad temper had killed an importunate beggar before leaving.

In northern Samaria I came into an ambush of highwaymen and was suddenly surrounded by masked men. They took my purse and bags but allowed me to ride on with my camel. Now the meed of mercy that came to me was due to my familiarity with the Aramaic tongue and to my quick wit, for I said that a troop of Roman horsemen were coming behind the hill. They hurried into a thicket and I rode on and saw no more of them. Fortunately, I had a few pieces of silver in the pocket of my blouse, enough, I reckoned, to take me to Gerasa, for I was then near the border of Galilee.

My faith in the one God and in His servant Apollos had of late been growing. I prayed no more to the god of my fathers. To whom could I go save to my generous, deep-hearted friend of the long trails?

Next day I was in the land of the great roads, and crossing the storied fields of Esdraelon. There is an old saying that the vast plain is like a large-limbed ass stretching himself between the sheepfolds of the high country and finding it a pleasant place to lie. Here I saw the snows of Hermon lifted above the deep gorge of the Kisimeyah, home of the cold winds. I stopped to refresh myself and my camel at a rivulet in a glen of the hills.

The many flowers of the late spring and the vivid green of the rock-strewn slopes and plain floor cheered my heart. I remember that on this day I came into my best inheritance—a passionate love of beauty. I

tarried by the fountains, hid by green thickets, and was loath to leave the groves of holly and maple and olive and sycamore trees. I passed corn lands and gardens and villages inhabited by kindly, hospitable folk. The thought came that this side of paradise there could be no fairer land than Galilee, and I wondered not that the man whose soul and countenance had led me so far should love to dwell in it.

I asked every one who came up the road from the north about Gerasa, and it chanced that I met a man and his wife who had come from that city. They had heard the voice of Apollos the day gone, and gave me good news of him, that he was a famous teacher, honored in all the ten cities. They said that he was then in Bethsaida living with his mother. He had been denounced by many of the Scribes and Pharisees for his faith in the great Jesus of Nazareth, who had been thrust out of the synagogue at Capernaum as a false prophet, a blasphemer, a winebibber, and a glutton. These champions of the ancient law had raised such a tumult that the God-sent Jesus had left the city and gone to other parts, His life being in danger there.

And as I was leaving them the man said:

"I wonder that the mighty One, having the power of God in His hands, does not use it and put down His enemies."

Now knowing that my beloved was in Bethsaida and that I was sure of being able to find him, I hastened on my way.

At even, having passed the broad-terraced moors that slope to the clifflike wall of the lake, and descend-

ing to the edge of its blue waters, I saw, mirrored on their still surface, white-winged fleets and many towers and villas along the shores. On the rim of the great bowl filled with blue water, and beyond it, were the city of Capernaum, its lovely Greek villas, the hippodrome at Tericheæ, the high houses of Hippos, the amphitheater and acropolis of Gadara and the Roman camp above them. Then I knew why the Messenger of God had tarried and taught there. He, too, must be a lover of beauty.

I journeyed through Magdala to Capernaum while it was yet day, and was stopped by the hated publican, a stout, bearded man, at the receipt of customs. I had with me some articles which I had bought in Samaria and he would not let me pass unless I should pay a duty more than their cost. I had not the money to pay him.

Now, a man stood near who offered to buy my camel. I was not then schooled in the tricks of the publican. The man proffered a sum far below his value, but I was of a mind to hear him, being near my journey's end and in need of money. I must buy new linen for myself and the child, and a robe and other finery, for I could not bear to have my friend see me in travel-stained garments. Always I had been careful that his eye should be pleased with the look of me. So I put a price on the beast a little above the sum offered, and it was quickly counted out. I entered the city afoot. There I fed my vanity with a necklace and rings and embroidered linen and rare perfume and jeweled slippers and a robe like that of the Roman lady. I had my hair dressed as hers had been and put a touch of red on my cheeks and lips. My folly

looms in my memory like the tower of Damascus. Its shadow spans my life.

My money was half spent when I hired a boatman to take me across the bay. A litter conveyed me from the landing up the heights to the home of the teacher, Apollos.

My heart trembled within me when I saw him standing with an aged woman in a little garden through which a path led to his door. Now I faced the greatest trial I had known. Oh, the fear of it as it came near, deeper than I had felt even in the lion's lair! I began to distrust my finery and jewels; my hair, built up like an eagle's nest and ringletted; the paint on my lips and cheeks. In a flash it came to me that I had been a better figure without them. My pride! where was it gone? I stood looking at him, the child in my arms, trembling and afraid. With bare head, erect and beautiful as that of the fair god of Hellas, he stood a moment in the sunlight among the flowers, looking at me.

"I must have seen you before, but I know you not," he said.

Thinking of that moment, I can hear the timid, wistful tone of my voice saying:

"I—I am Doris; your friend of the long trails."

He ran toward me, stopping suddenly as he came near, and saying:

"This—this is not the sweet, beloved Doris I met in the far desert. This is some Roman lady. The child! What of that?"

I recall the little silence that followed, in the which I was tempted to lie to him but I did not.

"My own," I answered.

"Married! Where is your husband?"

Again a little silence, and then:

"I have no husband."

Quickly he turned away and covered his face with his hands and a great throe of anguish shook his back and shoulders. I was calm and have no need to seek the reason for it, having come to know that the lower depths of the heart are as dry as the desert. Remembering my dream, I asked:

"Do you not understand? Can you not forgive me?"

There was a kindly tone in his voice when he turned and said:

"I was born a Pharisee, and there are things which I cannot do. I loved Doris of the long trails and the clean heart. She was like a star in the night shining on my way. But I will have nought to do with you. It is a saying of my fathers that an evil woman is like a worm in wood, she destroyeth her husband."

He beat his hands upon his breast, and added: "Deep, ancestral, beyond my power to change it, is this pride of mine—this hatred of all low, wallowing, pagan filth."

"An evil woman!" How the words hurt and angered me. That phrase had been like a stone hurled straight from a sling. He did not understand. He could not. He was like all other men. Had not Vespasian told me that the Jews were as hard as the rocks on which they were born?

Now that I try to tell why I should have turned and walked hurriedly away, as I did, I find it no easy thing to do. Whom had I then for a counselor, save my bitterness? Pride, anger, disappointment, self-reproach, impulsive youth, anger against him and

against myself, each had their part in this climax of my little drama. Dare I say that they were the helpers of that divine power, content only to lead me out into the thorny ways as it shaped the curious structure of my life?

CHAPTER VI

IN THE THORNY WAY

I HIRED a boatman to take me across the lake. I could not bear to stay in Bethsaida. Often the heart of man is like a little country which is the prey of sedition and ambitious knaves. How quickly one's best friend may be enthroned in his fancy as the chief of all his enemies! How bitter the plans against him! Of course Satan is at the bottom of all that.

I hated Apollos for his cruel words. I would not then let myself think of his side of the matter. I did not know that he, having recovered from his sad astonishment and repented of his harshness, was even then seeking me in the city streets. After all, I had been looking for a god and had found only a man. I saw the abyss toward which I was riding and cared not to pull the rein.

"Whither go you?" asked the boatman, with a kindly smile. He was young, with a figure like that of the Roman god Hercules, a statue of whom I had seen at the gate of Gerasa and a face browned to the hue of bronze. His smile was kindly.

"To Tiberius."

He looked at me and said:

"It is an evil place. The son of Cæsar and many of his cursed land are there. These Romans are like the plague of frogs in Egypt. Are you a Jew?"

"No, a Greek," I answered.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as if I had made a sufficient explanation.

A publican met me near the landing and demanded a head tax before he would let me enter the city. I paid it and became a hater of those grasping men who, in the name of Cæsar, were ever robbing the people.

I had now no fear of the young lion of Rome, and my will was strong to find the grand lady and get her sympathy and advice. I remembered the friendly tone of her voice. It had been food for my vanity and oil for my wounds. An hour I waited at the entrance to the baths of that city named for the ruler of the world. Near the end of the day I saw her come in her litter. I knelt before her as she alighted.

"Woman, begone!" she exclaimed impatiently. "I know you not."

One of her slaves had rudely seized my arm to thrust me out of her way when I said: "Oh, mighty sister! We were both born in the same green valley of Thrace. Do you not remember me?"

She looked at the child in my arms and then at my face, and asked: "Are you that wandering dove from the cote of Vespasian?"

"The same, and I crave a word with you."

"You must have broken a wing and come down into bad weather. What a change! Come, we will sit a moment in yonder peristyle."

We sat down on a marble bench together while I told of the troubles of my breaking heart. She laughed and said:

"My young sister of old Hellas, what have you been trying to do with yourself? Down the road you were

like a flower of the wilderness. I like you not in this finery. If Vespasian were to see you now, he would run like a scared gazelle. You were much better in your simple robe and blouse. They did not cover up your youth and beauty. What need have you of jewels and paint? These are cheap things and you are like a country miss trying to be a lady in Rome. You are dressed to be the prey of hucksters. Go to the bazaar and trade this finery for a simpler costume. I will meet you there and you shall have the benefit of my taste."

She directed me to the great bazaar, where I waited a long time, the child in my arms, and was almost weeping with remorse and weariness before she came. As I stood in the crowded bazaar waiting for my new friend, I could not hold Apollos out of my thoughts, and I had to fan the fire of my resentment to keep it burning.

It was then that I caught a look of wonder and sympathy in the innocent face of the little lad in my arms. I was of a mind to flee from the way I had chosen and go back to my beloved in Gerasa and seek forgiveness in tears at his feet. It was not to be so. On my way to the street I met the grand lady from the capital of the world.

"Poor child!" she exclaimed, as she patted my shoulder. "You look like the wife of a cheesemonger! A friend of mine is waiting for you in the street. Let us make haste and get you properly dressed."

How she bullied the salesmen and slaves who waited on us! She had the Roman manners, having spent most of her life in the great city and a part of it in the house of Cæsar. How abjectly they took her insults,

thanking her and bending their heads as she spoke!

They gave a good allowance for the things I wore and we bought a tunic and a palla of blue silk. The lady insisted that I should wear the Arab kaffiyeh flowing down upon my shoulders, with golden head bands, as she thought them most becoming. I dressed my feet in dainty sandals. When I stood before her, worried that my money was nearly all spent, she said:

"Now you look very beautiful. Worry not about the money, my child. You will soon learn that life is like a play of Aristophanes and that money is for its wine and masques and costumes, and that human love is its great Comedian and marriage the ass on which he rides to market. You will learn that the innocence of youth is the great joke and its beauty the chief play-thing. And this is the only wisdom: Nothing but art and a capering foot and a merry face can save one from being the bore and butt of the play."

Pagan that I was, I have to acknowledge a sense of heartsickness at hearing this frank brief of the philosophy of the Roman world, for I was young and had little knowledge of its cities. My new friend, observing the troubled look in my face, added:

"There is plenty of money in Tiberius, and you will get your share of it, with a Greek brain in your head. What are you going to do with the child?"

"Keep it," I answered.

"Impossible! There are places where it can be cared for."

"I will not part with my boy," I insisted. "He is all that I have."

"My child, you have grace and beauty—the best

gift of the gods. I know not what he will say to this child. He is Caius Varus, a gentleman from Rome, very rich and good looking, once a general in the army who served in Gaul. He comes here for the baths. He will spend the season in Tiberius and he may take you with him to Rome. Think of that, pretty one. If he likes you, he would cover you with gems and fill your lap with gold."

I trembled with fear as I followed her into the street. Varus was a fat, jolly old gentleman in a wig and senatorial toga. Said the lady:

"This is a timid, blushing maiden from the south. She knows the desert better than the sown land and the cities."

The old gentleman was quick to reply:

"And what a form and head she has! There is a saying in this land: Go north for riches and south for wisdom. I am glad to see that there is a better thing than wisdom in the south."

"What is better than wisdom?" I asked.

"The beauty of Venus."

I was not so guileless as I looked, for I knew the meaning of such words on a Roman tongue.

The man put his hand upon my shoulder and said:

"Come, my sweet one, let us go to the baths." He turned to Thamyris and added playfully: "I think that the baby becomes her. It is a bright-faced youngster. It will give me a touch of vanity."

He helped me into his litter and we went to the baths together. Such was my entrance into the kingdom of darkness and despair. I shall spare myself by saying as little as I can of that affair. I could wish that I had not to speak of it. Yet what I say must be

frankly told, knowing that I am under the great eye of God.

Caius Varus was a quick-tempered old pagan, a swinish and disgusting creature that filled me with a kind of world sickness. I could not disguise my aversion.

I need only speak of the drunkenness and vomit and debauchery of his banquet room, where at last a ruse of Thamyris saved me from the wrathful violence of her lord and master—that Caius, soon to be the dreaded Caligula, emperor and terror of the world. I had refused to accept his caresses and, being strong as a young heifer from the hills, flung him away from me so that, top-heavy with wine, he fell broadside to the floor, whereat there was loud laughter. The prince rose in a rage and hurled his cup at my head and vowed that he would make an end of me. He ran to his room for his sword. It was then that Thamyris told me that her donkey was at the door and that a maid was near it with my palla and the child in her arms. She had known what was coming. I have not seen a woman of keener wit. I wonder that she kept her life and the favor of that Roman beast for years as she did.

Now it is a truth that even in these evil days, when forgetfulness would have been a relief, I had no taste for strong drink and took it sparingly, as did the lady Thamyris, else these lines would never have been written. She, remembering a certain vow which I had made to her and knowing the dangerous temper of that lion's whelp, and having some regard for me, had been forehanded in her preparation for this trouble. His sword was not where he could quickly put his hand upon it, and before he could fetch and warm it in my

blood I was riding away with the child in my arms. I have since learned how the drunken prince went from room to room and then through the grounds, searching for me and how Cassius Cheria, a guest, engaged him in hot words and held him off with the sword, being an expert in the use of it. The other guests were snoring on their couches or quarreling and singing over their cups, and Thamyris was apparently asleep.

The third watch of the night had come and the streets were deserted. I knew the road leading southward and when I had climbed the steep to the high rim of the lake I noted the stars ahead and took the broad moors, leaving the road behind me. It was no new thing for me, this traveling by the lighted windows of heaven. My child awoke and began a loud protest against traveling by night. Soon I discovered that a wolf or a hyena had been attracted by its cries. I returned to the highway and the beast ran around us in a narrowing circle until we had come to a sleeping village where many dogs befriended us and drove our pursuer back to the hills.

Daylight came. I explored the saddlebag and found bread and meat and cheese and goat's milk for the child and a small bottle of water and a little purse filled with silver. Again I left the road and stopped by a fountain and gave my donkey water and a chance to feed on the abundant herbage of the plain.

That evening I entered a village on the great south highway, weary and in sore need of rest. I stopped at an inn before which a crowd had gathered, it being a feast day. My little one was now able to walk a little clinging to my hand, and his childish prattle had begun to be a great comfort in my loneliness.

The inn keeper showed me to his guest room, the stone floor of which was covered with many rugs. I chose a corner and lay down to rest, my head upon a cushion and the child at my side. He, too, was weary, and in a moment had fallen asleep.

That day I had discovered in him a great treasure. After all, I was not quite alone. I had him to live for and had resolved that I would find some work to do and a way of life in which I could have peace with my own soul. Soon he would be old enough to know me.

I had studied his face. The look of it had given me great joy, for it was a lovely thing to see—exquisitely molded and crowned with fair, silken hair like my own, twirly as the tendrils of a vine. His eyes were dark and large and lustrous, his cheeks red. He was a healthy, strong-built child who slept much and cried little. I have never seen one more easily mothered.

An honest Arab woman from the south had helped me in the care of him in the two bitter months I had spent in the palace of the old Roman general.

Whither was I going? I was not quite like a drifting stick in the sea, for I thought of the two friends I had made in the Desert of the Wandering—the only friends left to me—the blind man, Bartimæus, and his daughter. I would seek them out in the lower valley of the Jordan. At their door I would be sure to find a welcome.

Apollos came into my thoughts with no frown upon his face. The soreness implanted by those arrowlike words of his had gone out of me forever. Now a deep, unfathomable longing was in my heart for him. Yet there was no hope in me, save this, that I should never see him again. An impenetrable wall had risen between

us. I understood him now. It was his soul, freed from the Pharisaic pride, in the blood and bones of his body, which had come to me in my dream.

Lying there with the little lad close beside me, I tried myself in the court of my conscience. I had been in the way of evil but was not so bad as the world would think me. It had been a hateful business from beginning to end. My soul had not submitted. I loved the things of good report and would cling to them now. No longer would I be "a jewel in a swine's snout." That is the phrase by which I had been known among the gay ladies of Tiberius.

I rose to my knees and bent my head and prayed to three of the gods of my fathers for help. I had much need of it, for while I was praying the inn keeper entered and said roughly that he would not have me in his house and that I must be up and off. I asked him why he made this demand, but he would have no words with me. I must go at once.

My donkey was at the door. Then, weary as I was, I lifted the child in my arms and went out into the public room where many villagers were standing. They looked at me out of hateful eyes and whispered evil things as I passed them—I was a Roman this and a Roman that. It was only their fear of the Romans, I doubt not, which bound their hands from violence—or was it the child in my arms? I gave the boy who held my donkey a piece of silver and mounted and rode away in the darkness.

When I think of that hour my heart is like an oven. I knew that those men were Pharisees and that they had some knowledge of my recent history, but how had they come by it? Had evil put its mark upon me

so that every eye could see it? Had I become one of those women who were jeered at and stoned by unthinking, merciless men?

I hated the Jews and their one God as I rode away in the darkness of that night. I had not yet learned how ill fame springs up and grows and travels on wings like those of the eagle. Nor did I know that my grace and beauty and my relation to Caius Varus had been the talk of the city of Tiberius and that I had been pointed out in the streets and that my name had gone into the songs of drunkards and the gossip of every tavern. Some of those men had seen me with the old general and heard tales of the Roman revels in which I had had a part, albeit a sober and involuntary one. How full of shame and disgust that part had been they could not know! My rôle in that dreadful comedy had been a failure and like to turn its whole course toward a bloody end, as Thamyris had known.

Far down the road I came to the little house of a shepherd, where lamps were burning. The shepherd and his family were just returned from a wedding feast, and they bade me be at home with them and gave me meat and wine and a bed on the floor of their one room among their children, and put my donkey in the stable.

How simple and childlike and generous and lovable were those common folk of that land save when they were in a mob inflamed by priests and serving, as they thought, the will of a wrathful Jehovah! They begged me to stay longer when I parted with them on the morrow, and I went away with a better thought of the Jews. It touched my heart to hear the good man say, as I was about to depart:

"I swear by the glory of God you have robbed us of a great pleasure in leaving our home so early in the day. May the Lord make you like a fruitful vine and give you many sons."

I was in the midst of a great dip where for miles, before and behind, the highway was in sight when suddenly a stout man with a large, smiling face which reminded me of a comic mask stepped out of a thicket and stopped me. He carried a bow and arrow in his right hand and a knife in his belt.

"What do you want?" I asked in Greek.

"To do you a favor," he answered. "Know you not that money is the root of evil?"

"So I have heard."

"What you have in your purse and saddlebags may be the ruin of you," he said. "I am here to relieve you of that peril."

"It might ruin you, sir," was my indignant answer.

"Good lady, that is impossible. I am already ruined."

I was dumb with consternation. He laughed and danced in the road before me and added: "Think what a cheap adventure you are having, my fair one. It will cost you only a few drachmæ and you will have something to talk about for a year."

I judged by his accent that he was a born Greek and I said: "Oh, sir, have mercy on me. You and I are of the same race and I am escaping from a great peril and have far to go and little money and a child in my arms. You may look into my purse and saddlebags."

This he quickly did. Then with a sigh he spoke: "You have broken my heart. I never saw a sparrow that resembled a peacock before. Look into my eye,

my right eye if you please. Thanks. Do you not see there the proud soul of dishonor? My fair lady, it is without a flaw."

I smiled and made no answer.

He went on with tears in his voice: "I little knew when I stepped out of the bush that you were going to rob *me*. Have mercy on me. I have only a thousand drachmæ in my purse. Here, take three of them and let me go."

He gave me the coins and I thanked him, laughing as I did so, and started my donkey. I hurried the beast and was soon beyond the reach of his arrows even if he had had the will to use them. In the days that followed often I thought of this cheerful bandit and always with a smile. He had been wise to give me the three drachmæ, for now I had not the heart to complain of him.

I had gone not a mile when I met a publican who demanded another tax of me, the paying of which took half my slender store of coin. Thereupon I left the road, being in fear of the minions of Rome, and the sun was in the middle of the sky when I saw a great multitude on a hillside far ahead of me. I guided my donkey through a broad, green, flowery vale toward the place, curious to know why such a crowd of people had assembled so far from the highway. I was now many miles from Tiberius and thought myself beyond the danger of insult. Many tents were spread on the side of the vale and a goodly herd of donkeys and camels were feeding on the slope around them. I asked one of the men who was watching the beasts, what was going on above, and he said:

"Jesus of Nazareth, the new King, is telling of our

great Father and the heavenly home and the way that leads to it."

The thrill of the old days when I was wont to sit at the feet of Apollos and hear his glowing talk of the mighty One, and of that day when I stood in the Temple at Jerusalem and heard the call to those athirst, came back to me. I left my beast with a kindly man and pressed on, eager to see the Prophet and to hear that magic voice again. In a moment I was in the edge of the crowd and hearing His bell-like tones, saying in the Aramaic tongue:

"Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, the other a publican.

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

" 'I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess.'

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying: 'God be merciful unto me a sinner.'

"I tell you that this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

I had seen the erect, beautiful, majestic figure of the Prophet King, clothed in white garments, as He spoke these words. And when they were spoken and had begun their everlasting work among the humble and the exalted, I saw Him not, for I was on my knees and my face was covered and I could hear only the tumult in my own soul, for it seemed as if the words were for me alone. If there was hope for the despised publican,

was there not hope for me? I know not how long I was kneeling there, beating upon my breast and whispering that abject appeal: "God be merciful unto me a sinner."

I was recalled from this deep, remorseful moment of self-absorption by loud cries and the scurrying of many feet.

"It is the demon of the hills," the people near me were crying. "They have caught him and brought him here to be healed."

I rose to my feet and lifted the child in my arms. A little way below me I saw a group of men coming up the hillside. In their midst was a giant figure, laden with chains, and held by ropes on all sides as if he had been a wild bull. His hair and beard were matted like eagle's feathers tossed in a basket. His great breast was bare. His coat and breech cloth hung in flapping rags. Those who held the ropes were in terror of him.

A man near me said that he was possessed of a terrible demon; that he broke all bolts and bars; that he had bitten off the ears and noses of men who had fallen into his hands and broken the bones of others. As they came near, the great arms and shoulders of the giant had a familiar look, and when I saw the scar on his right temple I recognized my beloved friend Marsitas and ran toward him, calling his name. A man pulled me back and said that I was a fool for my imprudence.

The unfortunate Marsitas seemed not to hear me. Had he forgotten even his own name? He sank upon the ground as if worn out by his struggles. He covered his face with his hands and moaned. Now as I

write I see him sitting there on the ground, his head bent forward. I hear the rattle of his chains and the mournful cry from the deep of his ruined soul as he uttered these words:

"I will have my revenge, though I be cast into hell for it."

Who was he but the gentle-hearted common people of Judea, I ask myself as I think of him—remembering all I have seen—robbed of their property, their loved ones, their occupation, oppressed beyond endurance, crazed by the wrongs they had suffered and finally possessed of a demon? My tears flowed like the waters of Abana.

Oh, the rattling chains and creaking ropes as the strong man rose up and struggled to be free!

"Make way for the demon!" That was the cry I heard as they pulled him forward between the parted throngs toward the mighty Prophet. I kept my place close behind those who held the ropes albeit with much difficulty.

The Prophet came down the hillside toward the demon followed by a group of sturdy men, tall and powerful as the sons of Anak. Among them I recognized the publican who had demanded so much of me at the receipt of customs in Capernaum and the stalwart fisherman who had taken me across the lake to Tiberius.

The Prophet demanded that they should drop the ropes and let the man be free. When this was done the multitude moved backward and I stood alone a little way from Marsitas who had sunk upon the ground breathing deeply. Gently the Prophet touched his brow and called him brother and then he commanded

the demon to depart from him. And the Prophet released his chains and Marsitas stood up in his right mind.

Oh, what a change in his face! In the twinkling of an eye the mask of ferocity had fallen away. His smile was like a burst of sunlight after the passing of black clouds. He looked at the people with wonder in his eyes. I saw the lost gift of memory returning to him as he stood with his hand upon his brow. He fell upon his knees before the mighty One and a great uproar arose and men and women were shouting: "Here is the very Son of God."

So great was the noise and the press of the people that I could not greet Marsitas or touch the robe of the Prophet as I had hoped to do. In a moment I was seized by strong men and hurried down the hillside and one of them said: "Woman, it is an unseemly thing for such as you to stand in the presence of the Son of God. I would as soon look for dogs in paradise. Go you away from here and come not back again or we shall avenge the Lord with your blood."

This I doubt not they would have done had I resisted them. They were sternly bent on pleasing God, those misguided men, who had not yet come to a knowledge of the breadth of His love and truth. I made no words with them but kept my humility and sought not to exalt myself, feeling all this to be a part of the punishment which my folly had brought upon me and accepting it in silence. Now it was the easier to bear because of a stranger thing than the healing of Marsitas. The paganism had gone out of me. Its idols were broken. I had found my way. A great peace had come to me and I was happy.

It is a deep saying, and very dark to the young, that tribulation levels and clears the way to wisdom. I mounted my donkey and these are the only words I spoke to them:

"Men, I do as you bid me, and as I travel I shall not forget to pray that the truth and peace of God may come to you as it has to me."

Thoughtlessly they laughed and I went on my way. Now it so befell that a husbandman and his family from the valley of the Jordan, riding asses, overtook me on the south road. They gave me a kindly greeting and I rode along with them. They had left their groves and vineyards to go and see and hear the great Prophet just for a day. They had stayed another day and yet another, the weather being warm. And the husbandman said to me:

"When we have seen One, come to earth from paradise and doing wonders and speaking the truth of God with a voice not of this world, it is no easy thing to leave Him. So we tarried day after day, while weeds and thistles grew in our groves and vineyards. Even now we think it a hardship to be going home. But our store of food was eaten."

"Did you talk with Him?" I asked.

"No. There were so many people that we could not get near to Him, the press being very great. His disciples and the faithful were always around Him and I think that only the afflicted were suffered to pass them, save little children, it being known that there were certain Scribes and Pharisees from Judea in the multitude who say that His power is from the prince of the devils and were minded to do Him harm. Among them were certain of our neighbors from Jeri-

cho. We know that it is the Most High that speaks with the tongue of the Prophet, for as we listened light and grace and peace were poured upon us."

I answered: "They also came to me."

And he continued: "I swear by the mercy of God it cannot be the prince of devils who heals the afflicted and gives comfort to the hopeless and teaches men to love their enemies. I go to my home purged of hatred and a brother to all the children of men—Jew and Gentile. Beelzebub would not have me so."

And this was my query: "Can you tell me some of the things He said?—for I could stay only a little time."

With the astonishing verbal memory of the intelligent Jew he repeated Jesus' stern denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees as I have heard it from the mouths of John and Peter. And many of the sayings he repeated, and told me how once at the end of the day He had called the children to Him and blessed them and lifted them in His arms as they gathered about his knees.

And I said: "I would give my life if only His hand had touched my little son."

"Whither go you?" the man asked.

"To the valley of the Jordan not far from Jericho," I answered.

"Then you shall see Him, for soon on a day we know not, He will set out for Jericho, I am told, on His way to Jerusalem. We shall see Him in the valley, but after that not again shall we see Him in the flesh, I fear."

And my query was: "Why shall we not see Him again?"

And the good man said to me: "At night the Prophet and His disciples were wont to go for rest and food to the home of a shepherd beyond the hill. And one morning the young disciple John came down alone to the people and told us of the plan of his Master: That He was going to Jerusalem through the valley and that His work would soon end in the City of the Great Kings; that He had said that He would return to His Father in Heaven and after three days rise from the grave and be seen of those who knew and loved him. It is a mystery. Neither I nor any of those who heard His words have been able to understand them."

A long way, then, we rode in silence, I thinking of what would come of all this and in those moments a prophetic vision of the great events I have seen came down upon me. This thought flashed in the darkness. He would teach His flock that human life was a little thing and set an example of courage which would lead a great number of them into the valley of death.

It was a well-kept home we came to, by and by, near the west shore of the Jordan, surrounded by a pleasant vineyard and groves of golden apples. A mile or so beyond we could see the roofs of Jericho. They besought me to spend a day with them and by such persistent vows of unhappiness if I refused that I gave in with a great gladness, for I had little money left and knew not what I should do. If another publican had fallen upon me I should have landed in prison.

"I am Nehemiah, of the apple groves," the man said to me, "and my wife is Miriam, of the open hand, beloved by the poor. Our home is yours and you shall

find no lack of food or wine or cheerfulness within our gates."

Nor did I in all the days that I tarried with them. I helped with the weeds and thistles, while the old mother of Nehemiah took care of my child, and sitting around the great pot one evening, as we ate our meat and sopped our bread, I told them the story of my life, so far as it had gone, hiding no part of its shame. And when I told how the grace of God had descended upon me and of the healing of Marsitas, which had come about in their presence, and of my forced departure from the hillside, they embraced me and called me their beloved sister. Then said Miriam:

"I swear by the light of God in your face that we will not let you leave us until you have a better place to go."

"And then not until you have promised to return and abide a long time with us," Nehemiah declared.

Hearing these words I was happier than I had been since the old days with my beloved. And Miriam said: "I shall write a letter to the teacher Apollos and tell him of your good fortune and of your great love of him. Hearing what you have said of the good man I wonder not that you cling to it."

Now on the following Sabbath I went with them to the synagogue in Jericho to worship and there I saw one Teron, a man who had been a guest in the house of Caius Varus during my stay under its roof. He was a Jew and a friend of Pilate, who had gone north to carry the governor's greetings and an invitation to visit the cities of the south to the nephew of Cæsar. Well I remembered his figure, his jewels, his rich garments and haughty face, and the unwelcome compli-

ments he had showered upon me. He recognized and greeted me in the great vestibule of the synagogue.

"My lady Doris," he said. "My pleasure is not so great as my astonishment. Why are you—here?"

"I am a convert to your faith, of the flock of Jesus, the great Prophet."

A dark smile shadowed his face and his head nodded.

"Are you at the house of Nehemiah?"

"Yes."

"I will come to see you."

I made no answer, for my heart was sick again and shaking like a reed in the wind. And Nehemiah said as we left the man:

"He is one of the bitter Pharisees and an enemy of our Lord and Master. He eats and drinks and grunts with the pigs of Cæsar in Tiberius and prays aloud on the street corners of Jericho."

And I answered out of the fullness of my heart: "If you would know how little the world is go ye on a journey with the scar of a great sin on your soul. You shall not have rest or peace. This day I must leave you."

"I swear by the gentle soul of my father, now in paradise, you shall not leave us when the time is come that you need our help and comfort," said the beloved Miriam as her dark eyes filled with indignation. "If you were not so young and beautiful the man Teron would not have noticed you. He is one of those hypocrites who have felt the scorn of our Master. He will be making love to you."

And this answer was wrung from my heart: "I hate

my youth and beauty. I would it could fly away like a frightened bird."

"Oh, my dear one, it is a sign of God's love of you and a comely thing to have," said Miriam. "Do not despise it, remembering whence it cometh."

I returned to their house and the next day Teron came to its door asking for me and went away in anger because of my refusal of his offered courtesies.

Immediately a neighbor of Nehemiah began to bring news to us of the blackest gossip, passing from lip to lip in Jericho, regarding my relations with the good man who was my host. And this was a claim of the rich and unconverted Scribes and Pharisees that the followers of Jesus were like the cattle of the fields, godless and unrestrained. To such a dangerous and evil pass this matter had come and within the space of three days.

Now for the sake of these good friends, and the cause of our mighty Master, I was firm in my will to be moving on, hoping thus to break this new bow-string of Satan. So at the day's end when the vale was in darkness the good man and his wife went with me to the little hut of the blind Bartimæus, a short journey back in the low hills above the plain. And this had put me in mind of him.

That very morning a hurricane rider, coming from the north, had stirred the valley with good tidings. The white-robed Prophet and a great multitude of His followers were on their way to Jericho and would soon be coming down the road. My plan was quickly made. I would go with Bartimæus to the side of the highway and wait with him for the coming of the

mighty One and when He was come I would ask Him to heal the man and give His blessing to the boy in my arms. It was thought that He would arrive with the light of the next morning.

Now Miriam had told me that Bartimæus had once been a faithful worker in the vineyards, and a thrifty man with a small house and some money bearing interest, until blindness came upon him. Now he was, every day, begging in the streets, his daughter being worn with illness but able only to lead him to his hopeless task. Nehemiah had brought a rug and a cushion and a blanket and Miriam a store of food for me to the home of the blind man.

His poor and shabby little hut was cleanly kept. The unfortunate pair seized a fold of my robe and kissed it and thanked God for my coming—he a gray, bearded man of the typical Jewish face, in garments patched and threadbare; she a sallow, thin, hollow-eyed creature, as worn and faded as her coat. They walked and talked and breathed and ate and drank but, in very truth, they were as those who are dead.

"Last night I saw you in my dreams and there were many people around us," said the woeful woman.

Then spake Bartimæus, saying: "And always when I have thought of the touch of your hand and the music of your voice I have seen in the darkness a face like that of an angel."

"Then was it not mine," I said.

And the blind man smote upon his breast, exclaiming: "Oh, that gentle voice! I shall remember it in eternity, if I hear it there, a thousand years from now, and the words it once spake to me: 'Here is the half of all I have, and may God help you!' Know you not,

my beloved, there are words that never die? They go across the waste of life with us into the heavenly home. They are as the substance of the spirit which they have nourished and kept alive."

And I answered: "Though you are blind, still have you a vision of great things."

"Nay, I am the humblest of men—a beggar in the streets, because my dear little one must have bread to eat, and there is nothing I can do but think. And much thinking I have done since the darkness fell upon me."

Then said his daughter: "Often I remind him that I have grown to be a woman; but always he speaks of me as if I were a little child."

And Bartimæus answered: "When I saw you last you were a tiny thing, with a head no higher than my knee, and let me keep you as you were. This growing up is a woeful business in Judea."

"Be of good cheer, my brother," said Nehemiah. "Jesus of Nazareth will be passing here to-morrow, and it may be you shall see Him."

"I have heard of that Man and of the great things He has done. But how—how may I see Him?"

"He is the Son of God, and hath power to heal you."

"Alas! my beloved, I have traveled far to find the great healers. They were said to have a power not of this world. I wasted my substance on them, and I see not."

Then Nehemiah: "Jesus of the house of David is He seen of old by our prophets. I have stood by Him when He healed the blind and sick and those rotted by leprosy and possessed by demons. I have been a hard man, thinking only of my harvests and my

moneys and my usuries. What have I ever done for you, my neighbor, save now and then to drop a farthing in your cup? Now, behold, He hath given me a new heart and a new spirit, in token of which I shall give to you and to others like you the half of all I possess. And this I say that ye may have a greater thing—faith in the Son of God. For unless ye go to Him with faith in His power, it were as well for you to stay at home.”

The blind man arose and held out his hand and Nehemiah took it and Bartimæus felt his beard and shoulders, saying: “Let me be sure that I dream not, for these are mighty things that you tell me and it would appear that the promised time has come.”

“I assure you it has come,” said Nehemiah. “I bid you have faith.”

Then said he of the sightless eyes: “When I was young I could believe only in the things that I could see with the eye of the body. Now for many years have I been seeing only with the eye of the soul. What am I without faith? It has become as the meat in my pot. If He can heal the blindness of the spirit, then know I that He is of God.”

Nehemiah put a coin in his hand, saying: “Feel that. It is of gold, mind you, and it speaks of the great things which He hath put in our hearts. At dawn on the morrow you shall go with us to wait by the roadside for the coming of the mighty One. Have faith and help Him to make you to see the glory of God.”

Miriam and Nehemiah went to their home. Early in the morning they were to meet us at a point on the highway known as the Traveler’s Well. I spread

my rug outside the door of the hut and wrapped myself and the child in my blanket and slept under the stars as I had been wont to do in my travels. I awoke in the night and heard the blind man praying and talking with his daughter. They were not able to sleep with this great mystery of a new dawn so close upon them. It touched my heart to hear him telling his beloved "little one" of all the things he would do for her when he could see the beauty of the world again and go back to his work in the vineyards.

Now I had been dreaming of the morrow, and as I dreamed, I saw Apollos coming, at the side of my great Master, and he had embraced me and called me his beloved. And it came to me to wonder, as I lay there in the darkness, if Jesus ever dreamed. Perchance, even then, He was dreaming of that day of peace and good will which was to come, I doubted not, some time in the distant ages when even the spirit of Rome should be chastened, its cruel chains and swords and spears broken and flung down to rust.

Here again I have been wont to stop for rest and tell my friends to return next evening and hear to its end the wonderful story of Bartimæus, and they failed not to come and to fill the house with others seeking light, there being no witness save myself of that mighty happening, in our parts.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE GREAT LIGHT

THE light was dim when we set out by a path leading down the hills to the highway, the young woman, whose name was Irene, holding her father's hand. We met Nehemiah and Miriam by the well and went on with them to a place in the road where we could see far ahead. The sky was clear and before the sun had risen above the dun hills in the east, mounting like great dust heaps, one above another, we saw far away the long caravan of our Master coming. The mountains of Moab and the bare heights of the wilderness were in fading purple robes as the light grew. Suddenly their robes fell away into the hollows beside them, and they stood in tunics of pearly pink.

"I wonder if the kingdom He speaks of can be fairer than this?" I said to Nehemiah.

And he answered: "Man knows not the power of the sun's light to make beauty until his soul's eye hath seen the light of truth. The Kingdom of God may be very near to us."

Now as we went to our place, people began to pass us, coming up from the city riding on asses, going out to see the great Prophet and to sell fruits and bread and meat and pastry to the multitude who followed Him. Behind them were many on foot, some bearing

litters. Bartimæus, hearing these pass him, and moved by the habit of years, began to call out for alms, and Nehemiah touched his arm and said:

"Be silent, my brother. A new day has come, and now you shall beg only of the mighty One and then for nothing but the use of your eyes. He is coming and when He is near I will touch your arm. Then cry out for mercy and put the faith of your soul in the words."

Slowly they came down the road, led by those sturdy fishermen from the great lake in the north, followed by the white-robed Messenger and the other disciples and the multitude, some afoot, some on asses, and some in carts. And while they were a long way off we could hear many singing, joyfully, as often I had heard Apollos sing on our journey from the desert to Jerusalem. And this I have learned from many and my own witnessing would confirm it: Jesus of Nazareth was not a sad King, save in the latter days. He loved joy, and this I got from the look of His face and the sound of His voice, that nothing gave Him greater pleasure than to see and create happiness. I can even imagine Him laughing over some witty remark of a companion or some droll happening on the road.

And suddenly we saw a troop of Roman cavalry coming at high speed, in the middle of the highway, their helmets of polished metal and their spears and staffed eagles glowing in the sunlight. And when they had swept by, on their way to the city, Nehemiah said:

"They are like the horsemen of Solomon whose heads were sprinkled with the dust of gold. They are

moving always when the Prophet moves, for the Romans think Him a disturber of the peace, and so He is, but it is the peace of Satan. Only the great multitude of His Jewish friends have saved Him from death on the charge of sedition."

We hurried across the highway, for now the Prophet and the group around Him were coming near. Hard by the roadside we placed the blind man and his daughter. We were close behind them, I with the little lad in my arms, and looking, at first, for the familiar head and shoulders of Apollos, but quickly forgetting that selfish hope when I saw clearly, and not ten cubits from where I stood, the face and form of the Son of God; like as my beloved one had drawn it, yet very different, for who could describe the King in His beauty and especially His eyes, which knew neither bound nor mystery, and tried the hearts of men? I take no such task upon myself, having known those mighty things which are far beyond the reach of words.

The great moment had arrived. Nehemiah touched the arm of Bartimæus, and whispered: "Now speak out."

Never can I forget the cry of that human soul and the note of faith in it: "*Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!*"

It was the voice of all the despairing, downtrodden children of Judea and strangely like that of the publican of whom I had heard in the parable spoken on the hillside.

A voice behind us commanded the blind man to hold his peace. How fitted to the scene was that command, for it came from Teron, the haughty, Pharisaic

oppressor! Bartimæus would not hold his peace, but cried out the louder:

"Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!"

My Master stood, the long procession halting, and commanded that the man be brought to Him. I, trembling with excitement, took the hand of Bartimæus and led him to the mighty One, who said:

"What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?"

And Bartimæus answered: "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

And immediately he saw, and shouted in a loud voice, shaking as did a lock of his hair in the breeze: "Lord, I see Thee, and I know that out of Thy very faithfulness hast Thou caused me to be troubled."

Many people had gathered about us, and there was a great tumult, and some whose souls had been blind saw the light, and I forgot even to hold up my little son to be blessed.

Nehemiah, Miriam, and I stood by the happy pair, sharing in their emotions, and curious people gathered about us looking into those quickened eyes with exclamations of awe and astonishment. And when I turned to behold again the face and form of the King who had done this mighty thing, He had passed on with the trusted ones and the long procession had resumed its march. And as I stood watching them, I saw Marsitas, clad in new garments, his face like as it had been of old, and called to him. He came aside and knew and embraced me.

"Oh, child of the morning!" he exclaimed. "I thank my God that you are still in this world to see the coming of the Lord and the multitude of His people—an endless throng that shall go marching

through the ages. Behold the fore ranks in the great procession! Listen. Out of the fullness of their hearts they sing. See the light in their faces, for the shadow of hate and fear is no longer upon them."

Chuza, the wife of Herod's steward, had come out of the throng with him to greet us. She had given him money and he was on his way to Gaza to find his children, and soon he was to work in her vineyards in Galilee. By and by, when the crowd had passed, he and the steward's wife walked with our little party to the house of Nehemiah, while I heard of his wandering in the hills, after the bloody raid, when as a leopard he watched by the way for his enemies, sleeping in caves at night, until a demon came into his soul and thereafter he knew not what befell him until he saw the Master taking off his chains.

Chuza gave me news of Apollos, whom she knew well, saying that the Romans had again seized him and thrust him into prison, but that her husband had hope of freeing him.

As we parted at the gate of Nehemiah, Marsitas said to me, "May you be like a watered garden, my beloved!" Then, stooping and taking the hand of my little one, he added: "May the grace of God be poured upon him! Remember, my sister, that if you need help, my strength is a blessing to be shared with you."

Bartimæus and his daughter went on with them, wishing to see the city, and to look again upon the face of the Son of God and to buy new garments with the money from the hand of Nehemiah, and to tell of the great thing which had happened by the way-side. I tarried at the house of my friends, being

hungry and athirst. It was a beholding I have remembered with joy—the look of Bartimæus, erect and walking swiftly down the road toward better things, I hoped, his daughter at his side, a new spirit in them.

Teron, the friend of Rome, lay in wait for me at the door, but I would have no words with him and he left us, a dark look in his eyes. After a little time we went down to Jericho. It was a city of confusion. The streets were thronged and a loud and peevish clamor was on every side between certain of the Scribes and Pharisees and those of the new faith, who, with all boldness, defended the teaching of their Master, albeit they were men of peace who sought no quarrel. They were, in truth, set upon by the haughty men of the city who were enraged that humble folk should dare try to oppose and instruct them. And this was the beginning of the trouble.

Jesus and His disciples had passed through the city and gone to be guests of the most hated sinner in those parts—one Zacchæus, chief of the publicans. Roman soldiers, on foot and horse, were making many arrests in an effort to maintain the peace of the city.

All this had come to such a height of mischief that Bartimæus had been spat upon and roughly handled for telling of his good fortune, and this by men who denounced him as the friend of Beelzebub, by whose power they said that he had been healed.

It was a sorrowful thing to see how hard it is for the children of men to let go of the errors which have come to them through generations wise only in their day. They get a poison behind their tongues like that of the asp. .

Jericho was not a good place to tarry in, and we

came away fearing that we should be set upon and pressed beyond our power to put up with it. Passing through the crowd, I had seen men, the friends of Teron, I fancy, pointing me out. But for the fact that they were engaged in other excitements, it is possible that I would have been stoned that day. We passed them without harm—the Lord being with us, I have dared to think—and as we shook the dust of the city from our feet hurrying homeward, the words of Apollos came to me spoken when he saw, with prophetic vision, that Jesus would be slain and that His followers would thereafter have need of His courage to keep the new light shining in an evil world.

Now before we reached the house of Nehemiah, the thought had come to me that I must be moving on. Was it the evil face of Teron which had begun to haunt my soul, or the lighted countenance of Jesus—the one repelling and the other inviting me? Both were at work in my fancy when I said that I must be going.

“Whither go you?” Miriam asked.

“To Jerusalem, with our great Master.”

Then said Nehemiah: “The will is strong in us to go and if need be to die for Him, but the vineyards hold us here. Stay yet another day, I beg of you, and I will give you a donkey to ride. Abide with us here in the house until morning and then you may go. This last night we have much to talk about and let evil men say what they will.”

So I tarried at the house of Nehemiah, and when the even was come and we lay talking in the inner room with our bread and meat and wine, we were startled by

the trampling of horses and a loud shouting and knocking at the gates.

"By the mercy of God! What is this?" said Nehemiah as he left us.

In a moment through the open door I heard the shouted command: "Open the gates. We are the soldiers of Cæsar."

Miriam seized my hand and a great terror shook us.

"Now may the God of love help us with His mercy," she whispered, as we sat waiting for what should come in a doomful silence. We heard them approaching as slowly, it seemed to me, as the crawling of a serpent. Then Nehemiah and two Roman officers entered the room. And one of the latter said:

"We have come to take the woman Doris to Jerusalem. The general has ordered that she be removed from these parts."

Nehemiah spoke politely to the soldiers, offering them wine, which they drank greedily, and saying:

"Tell me, O men of Cæsar! What is the charge against this woman?"

And one of them answered as he drank: "A great tumult has broken out in the city and she is one of its causes."

While we women expressed our infelicity in tears, Nehemiah besought the men, on account of my young child, to let us stay in his house until morning, when he promised on his honor to deliver me up to them. But the men abated not a whit their obstinacy. The beloved Miriam would have me leave the child in her care, and that I did.

I put on my palla and headdress and took leave

of those beloved ones, but at that event I pause, like a traveler come to bad footing, and leap for fear of the mire.

A horse was waiting for me beyond the gates. I mounted and rode toward Jericho at a gallop in the midst of a troop of cavalry. And as I rode the feeling was in me that I would not see my child or my friends again. The first rank were given torches at the post in the city, and up through the wilderness we flew at a clattering pace, changing our lathered horses every five miles.

In the third watch of the night we passed the great wall of the city at its eastern gate and soon neared the looming Tower of Antonia, a place of painful memories. There an old Arab slave of the Romans, bearded and bent and as silent as the Sphinx of Egypt, with a lamp in his right hand, led me into a narrow hall and down a descent of steps and through a long, dank corridor to a danker dungeon. On its stone floor in a corner was a pallet of straw whereon I threw myself, exhausted by the long ride and the great burden of my fears. I was glad when the slave had gone away and left me in black darkness, for it was good to be alone. In the midst of my thinking and praying I was like one wading in the edge of the sea that breaks suddenly into deep water, for my fears were quickly drowned in sleep.

Many hours later I was awakened by the touch of a hand and, opening my eyes, I saw the old Arab slave bending over me, with his lamp. By signs he indicated that I was to arise and go with him, and this I did, and I followed through the dank, long, sub-

terranean corridor. I heard, coming from a distant place, a voice and unmistakably the voice of Apollos saying in a prayer:

"Oh, my God, be with all those who love Thee and their enemies, and especially be Thou with my beloved one this day, and protect her from all harm."

I stopped. It was the voice I had heard a thousand times and dearer to me than any other. I stood and called his name as loudly as I could, but no answer came to me. I saw the glow of the slave's lamp far ahead in the darkness, and hastened to catch up with him. We ascended to the great stone-paved court above, where for a little time I was almost blinded by the sunlight. There were many soldiers and a crowd of prisoners waiting to be marched to the court. And there, before I had taken twenty breaths of the grateful open air, the man Teron came and greeted me with these words:

"My lady Doris, I am offended by the indignities which you have suffered. I have come to see that you have lodging and treatment fitted to one of your station. I have leave to take you to the house of a friend of mine, where you may enjoy the comforts to which you have been accustomed."

And my answer was: "Sir, I will stay here and take what Rome may give me, until I know the charge on which I am brought hither and can prove my right to freedom. But I have a dear friend, one Apollos of Gerasa, who is shut up in this place, and I would learn why he is held and what may be done to free him."

Foolishly I had put a halter on my neck. He was

quick to answer: "I will go with you and help you to learn the facts and what, if anything, can be done for him."

So it befell that we went together to the office of the great commander of that mighty fortress, a room with a tessellated floor and gilded walls and ceiling and Babylonian rugs and hangings. He sat at a table, on a rug-covered dais a little above the level of the main floor, in military boots and a loose, embroidered scarlet robe within the folds of which a golden scabbard hung from his belt. He was the Legatus Legionis who sat reading a roll of parchment which lay before him on the table.

Teron left me seated on a rug, while he went to the great man and conferred with him privately. I know not what was said, but observed that it was much and that the parchment was often referred to. By and by Teron came and led me to this splendid servant of the emperor and I stood with bent head before him. To my surprise he arose and held out his hand to me and spoke in the Roman tongue and with that noble courtesy which a well-bred Roman knew how to command when it suited his purpose:

"My lady Doris—beloved of my valued friend, Caius Varus—if I had expected you and been aware of your arrival here, I should have given you better lodgings. I learn that it was feared you would fall a prey to the religious fervor of Jericho and therefore you were brought to this secure home of the legions. My friend Teron, ruler of that city, brings no charge against you, and therefore we release you with apologies."

"I thank you, O right hand of Cæsar!" I answered.

"Now may I have knowledge of the charge against my friend, Apollos of Gerasa, who is in confinement here?"

He answered: "Apollos of Gerasa was brought here, on the governor's order, from the fortress of Cæsarea, for raising a sedition in which three people were killed. It is possible that he will be put to death. Of the purpose of the governor in this matter, I am without information. Teron, who is his friend, could perhaps learn what is to be the fate of the man Apollos."

Teron touched my arm and said: "If you will come with me I shall take you to one who can help us in that matter."

I thanked the commander of the legions and went with Teron, having in me, nevertheless, a great fear and distrust of him. We left the tower and went down to the council chamber of Pontius Pilate, the Procurator of Judea. A multitude had come up to Jerusalem by the four ways for the feast of the Passover, and its streets were crowded.

There was a guard of soldiers at the door of Pilate's chamber who admitted us, with obsequious bows to my companion. That famous, powerful, and much hated officer, chief of all the greedy swarm of gadflies who sucked the blood of the province, sat in a striped senatorial toga at a table near the rear wall of the chamber. The High Priest in his robes and certain other "great men of the city," so called by my companion, were conferring with him. These I saw as I stood alone in a shadowed place between the columns, Teron having gone forward, and as I stood waiting I heard the High Priest say of one whom I quickly

knew to be Jesus, that He was near Jerusalem and that He should be put to death because all the men of substance and learning among the Jews knew Him to be a blasphemer and a false prophet.

Pilate answered: "But think of the number of His friends. They are like the leaves in the forests of Lebanon. You would provoke a civil war."

And one said: "Before their number grows He should be quietly and swiftly put out of the way. There are not many of His followers who dwell in Jerusalem. The longer we delay the more they will increase, for the ignorant are easily misled."

Now I, being afraid of great men, held my place in that shadowed corner among the columns, Teron having joined the group in Pilate's presence, so that none of these men had observed me. The ruler of Jericho must have warned them of my presence, for immediately their voices were lowered so that I heard no more of their talk. But I had heard enough to darken my soul with sorrow and put me in a great fear. Wherefore I was like one stung by a scorpion and pressed to cry out with his pain, but held my peace.

The great mystery of the slaying and the rising from the grave was near. How dark was the thought of it! Was it all to be done so that those wicked men should be able to know the truth?

I wondered if the tumult in Jericho had not been for the purpose of detaining there a host of His followers so that the magistrates could turn them back to their homes. I hid behind a column while the rulers of the city were leaving the council chamber and in a moment Teron came to take me into the presence of the procurator.

This friend of Cæsar had a full, smooth-shorn face covered with fatness. He had black hair and thick eyebrows and large, dark-brown, restless eyes. They were searching, sullen eyes. Their glance swept from my head to my feet and back again.

"One of the snaky Greeks," was the verdict of his stern face as hard and cold as the stones on which we stood. He was not minded to create any pleasant illusion of my respectability as a momentary and agreeable setting for the interview and thus invite supplications. He had had enough of the tears and entreaties of women.

It must be said that he hurt me only with unspoken words which start a fire in the blood like the poison of the viper, albeit when he spoke a great contempt of me came out of his mouth. Yet his stone-like words were clothed with dignity:

"Young woman, I will not discuss with you the merits or the misdeeds of the man Apollos. I bid you take counsel with this able Scribe whose words have the weight of gold in Jerusalem and whose pleading in behalf of your friend would have far more effect than your own."

He picked up his stylus and with an imperious gesture commanded us to go on our way.

"Come with me," said Teron, "I will take you to where we can talk of this matter."

I was filled with doubt of the man's sincerity and a great fear of him insomuch that I trembled and could with difficulty collect my thoughts. Suddenly I recalled that it was the day when Nehemiah would be at the market place in Jerusalem.

"I wish to see the market place," I said.

And he answered: "We shall pass it and while you are looking at the market I will have a litter brought to take us to the palace of the governor. There we shall find hospitality and a chance to talk together."

Should I again put myself in the power of Rome and rely on its tender mercies? Still, if I could save Apollos even my life would be a little thing to give. Then it was that the thought came to me that my world was changed. The little span of life we live here had ceased to be so great a matter. It was like a journey in the desert beyond which were the grassy, flowery slopes and flowing streams and misty mountains of paradise. Now that the light had come to me should I sell my soul and lose its hope of meeting my beloved again either here or in the everlasting kingdom? Would not Apollos himself suffer with a measureless regret for such a folly of mine?

All this had come to me and yet was I unresolved, being sorely pressed in my heart to give and to do for him. We made our way through the crowds, and then, the retiring of Teron to find the litter—what a relief to be rid of him even for a moment!—and the market place and, presently, the friendly, eager face of Nehemiah and good news of the little lad left in Miriam's care! Hastily I told this dear friend of my problem.

"Put not your trust in the Romans," he said to me. "If he has aught to say to you let him go with you into yon bazaar whose owner is my friend. There you may both sit in comfort and talk, if need be, till the day ends. What is it that he has to say that can be said only in the palace of Cæsar's friend? I bid you think of that. You are young and beautiful and he

would have you in his power. With all your thinking of the noble lover, do not forget the little son or the great King who has redeemed your soul."

Now those words cleared the shadows from my path and gave me heart to follow it. The thought of my beloved one had so filled me that I had forgotten even my motherhood. When Teron came with the litter I said to him:

"I cannot go with you to the palace of your friend. Let us go into the bazaar of rugs and silks yonder and sit down together and talk of this matter of securing clemency for Apollos."

And then Nehemiah said to the Scribe: "You have the power, O friend of Cæsar and able ruler of Judea! to free him if you will. Do it and I shall pay your fee though it were a hundred dinars."

The proud man turned upon my friend with a look of unspeakable scorn, saying: "Huckster! Go back to your grapes and plums and apples. This is no affair of yours."

Then, Nehemiah not daring to answer, Teron drew me aside and frankly confessed his purpose, offering gold and the favor of the rulers. Rudely I turned away from him with words of indignation that he had so misjudged me. He followed as I walked, saying: "Think you that I know not of your history? Am I not richer and better favored than old Caius Varus?"

"You speak of that Doris," I said, "who is dead—as dead—O noble sir, as the oxen of Job. I am as one born again with a new mind and a new spirit."

Then having no knowledge of such a mystery, he asked: "Have you lost your sense of shame and come down to hucksters?"

And I, smarting under his insults, had not the patience which avoids wrath and answered: "No, it is because of my repentance that I turn from *you* to better men."

I could have contrived no deeper hurt for a proud Pharisee, bred to look down upon the common folk. His manner was like that of a serpent on a rock threatened with the rod. He writhed in anger as he gazed at me and set his lips for a curse. It would appear that he could think of none vile enough, for he spoke not, but darts and stones of envenomed scorn were flung at me out of his eyes. I faced about, fearing a blow from his hand, and walked to Nehemiah's side. When I turned, Teron was talking to one who sold beads some forty cubits from where we stood and in a moment was lost in the crowd.

I would not fail to say for the man Teron that he spoke not for himself alone but for a multitude in the world of his time, who could not understand the mystery of a new spirit. A woman driven or lured out of the straight way could not return to it. Such pretence as mine was an insult to a man of Teron's character, for did it not imply that I thought him a dunce?

I spent the day with my friend in the market place, and when the evening was come he took me to an inn, crowded with people, where we sat and ate our food together. When we entered it I observed that the bead merchant with whom Teron had spoken had followed us to its door, but knew not the purpose of his act.

As we sat together I told of the things I had heard in the council chamber of Pilate and Nehemiah was amazed. "I am told," he said, "that our Master will

spend the night at Bethany and come early up to the Temple to teach. Let us rise when the cocks are crowing for the dawn and go down to meet Him. I long to see His face again."

We slept on a rug with many pilgrims in a large room and were up before the sun had risen. Having eaten our bread and fruit, we set out for the Mount of Olives. No foot was abroad save our own and those of a man who walked a little way behind us with a staff, the sound of which, as it fell upon the stones, caused us to look back at him.

Soon he came up to us and greeted Nehemiah, saying: "A day begun early is well spent. Whither go you?"

"We go out to the Mount of Olives to meet our Master, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God."

"You should say the Son of Joseph," he answered and passed on.

Now when the sun was risen and we were down in the shadowed vale between the steep ways we heard the sound of pipes and of many voices far behind us. Looking backward we saw a great band of pilgrims coming through the Temple gate. They piped and sang and danced, after the manner of maids and young men, as they came down the slope. We climbed a little way up the mountain path and soon Nehemiah said:

"Let us go into this thicket and pray for the safety of our Master and when this happy band of the faithful is come near we will join it and go forward, singing."

We knelt in a mossy glade where pilgrims, on their way to the Temple, were wont to stop and pray. While on our knees we heard the sound of many feet

approaching swiftly and a voice we knew, saying: "I saw them enter this thicket."

We rose to our feet, I in terror, but Nehemiah embraced me and said: "Fear not, my beloved, our Master is our friend."

In that moment a band of angry men, numbering I know not how many, fell upon us, each with a staff in one hand and a stone in the other. Teron was among them.

"Let us make a ring and stone them," he proposed.

Stones—the weapons of rage—were everywhere in Judea.

Another said: "Not here so near the wayside with that mob of hucksters, and ox drivers coming. Let us take them aside to some lonely place and there punish them according to the law."

So in the midst of these with many a stroke of the staffs we were driven like dumb beasts down the deep vale of the Kedron and they laughed and prodded us, when we called aloud to our Master for help, until we held our tongues because of the pain we suffered. But a strange peace and calmness came down upon us through the gate of faith and filled our souls so that we forgot both our peril and our pain. I had found it a hard world to live in and with the help of my new treasure I ceased, suddenly, to grieve about leaving it.

In silence then I prayed for Apollos and my little son and when the men had driven us to a lonely place they bade us lie down together in the midst for execution, and when we had done this, and were lying rigid with anticipation of the crushing impact of the stones, I heard the voice of that man who had stopped them

before, when they were about to fall upon us in the thicket, saying:

"Hold your lifted arms a moment, ye avengers of the most high God, for it has come to me that we could use these children of hell to bring confusion upon this man Jesus whom they call their Master, and with telling effect on those who follow Him and find no harm in His blasphemies. Let us first take them before Him in the Temple, profaned by His presence, and see if He will dare to deny the law of Moses."

Now it came to pass that the others fell in with him and so in this wise we were delivered from our present peril and taken to a court in the Temple and there held under a guard of Pharisees until a priest came and beckoned to the latter and we were led, in the midst of them, to the Porch of Solomon to await the coming of our Master.

We could now hear the shouts and songs of the multitude ascending the steep way to the Temple gate. He was near. I thought not of myself nor of Nehemiah but of Him and His peril when this new snare should be spread before Him. Was it to create a moment of demon-like violence in which He and many of us who loved Him would be "put to death"?

Hundreds of those bitter men who had eaten the fruit of lies, stood behind us armed with staffs and stones. He came in the midst of the twelve, sturdy chosen ones, and this day it seemed as if all the sorrows of men were in His face and tears fell from my eyes when I looked upon Him. He scanned the great court in the way of one choosing his place. He came toward us, I know not why, save it be that those who had us in their keeping knew where He had been wont to stand.

How may I describe Him as He approached? It is told that John looking upon Him as he walked, cried out: "Behold the lamb of God." I knew naught of John, but as I saw Him I could have cried out in a like manner myself. I have seen Paul, an unlovely figure, and Stephen and Peter, when I had a touch of the same feeling and knew that man was indeed fashioned in the image of God and that His spirit may fill the humblest person with a power and beauty not of this world.

And still another thing comes to my help in telling of the personality of the mighty One. Those who stood around us, many of whom, I judged, had never seen Him, were hushed with awe as He drew near. They had come to mock Him and were silent. I do but repeat the words of David when I say that He was clothed with majesty.

It is true, my beloved, that He causeth the heart of man to sing, for the multitude of His followers sang as they poured through the gate and flooded every open space until the great court was like a vale in Palestine when the waters come rushing down from the high lands. Words of astonishment came to the lips of the men around us. They had expected no such flood of people, no figure so God-like, so commanding.

Now when the place was filled and no more could enter, Jesus commanded all to sit down, and when they were seated He and His disciples sat also, being, I doubt not, wearied by their travels, and Jesus began to teach, saying that He was the Light of the World and that those who followed Him should not walk in darkness.

And certain of those Pharisees around me made bold to question the truth of His words. But of many of them I hold a remembrance which is one of the treasures of my life. It was a wonder and a mystery to behold, as I did, the changing of their faces which had been as stern and hard as the mountain rocks in a cloudy day. Now on many the Light had fallen and I could see the new faith in them. I thought them as beautiful as the sun-touched flowers on the slopes of Hauran. Then came to me the words I had read in the book of Job:

"Thou changest his countenance and sendest him away."

I looked at Teron who was still in the darkness of the ancient night, and suddenly he and another led me before Jesus and thus falsely accused me:

"Rabbi, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned. What sayest thou?"

I took it for a just punishment of my own sins although I could have cried out for the sake of the good Nehemiah who had no part in them, but my tongue was holden. I could not speak. I felt as did the man of many troubles: "Though I be righteous yet will I not lift up my head."

My Master stooped down and wrote on the ground as though he had not heard. What he wrote I know not nor is there any witness I have met who is able to say. I watched his hand, the while it made this beautiful gesture, as if searching in the dust for the immortal and overwhelming words He was about to utter. No other rebuke to the stony heart has a like power in it. Those words are as the walls of his ever-crowded fold

of mercy. Now as to that writing in the dust the thought has come to me that He did it to divert the gaze of the people from me to Him and thus avoid increasing my wretchedness.

When they pressed Him for an answer He arose and looked upon them, and I turning as He had turned, to read my fate, saw a little quiver in their bodies. For a breath they were like a bank of reeds when suddenly the wind has touched it. One had started to speak and the word, half spoken, ended in a whisper. All had felt the power in His eyes. Then a silence such as I have known in the desert on a still night when I seemed to hear the singing of the stars! Like the rising of the sun above the edge of the great waste was the golden voice as He stepped close to me and lifted His hand and said:

"He that is without sin among you, let *him* first cast a stone at her."

And as He stooped again and wrote on the ground, there was a great murmur in the multitude and a growing stir and then a tumult like the breaking in of waters. Marsitas, and the wife of Herod's steward who, it befell, were near the Master, although I had not seen them, came and embraced me and many pressed about us while the ferment in the midst of which Jesus spake with His disciples was growing. Those men of the old faith, whether stricken in their souls or through fear of the number of our friends, gave no further heed to Nehemiah or to me. In a moment they were gone and when we were leaving the Temple porch thousands waved their palm branches and sang as with one voice so that I thought myself in the presence of the heavenly hosts:

A thousand years have we prayed to Thee, O God!
And Thou hast hearkened to the pleading of our lips
And known our soul's desire.
And Thou hast shown us the light of Thy countenance
Beautiful as the morning scattered on the mountains.
Like the dew unto Israel is Thy face, O God of our fathers!
And Thy voice like the pipe of the Shepherd when the hills
are green.
Whither shall we flee from Thy spirit—O whither?
I say to them of a fearful heart be strong.

Therein was the great story of the coming. My soul was lifted up and washed in that flood of triumphant song and for a little while I was carried away in the sweep of it. When it ceased I was walking near my Master and He turned and said to me:

"Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"

I said: "No man, Lord."

And He answered: "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more."

Of my many sins He knew. One of the disciples spake of the beauty of the Temple and I remember the words of Jesus:

"The day will come when there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

Marsitas and I and Nehemiah spake together for a little time and as we tarried our Master and His disciples passed on. The press shut them off from us and I saw them no more.

Marsitas told me that when Jesus was approaching the city He spoke of a time when its enemies should cast a trench about it and lay it even with the ground and all who should be in it.

These words I remembered, for I could not help wondering if I should live to behold the end of the city and its grand people who would not see the light. And while we were talking together a woman came and embraced me and kissed my cheek and called me her sister. She was beautiful to look upon, for her form and face were comely and the latter shone with happiness. She held me against her breast and said: "You are that fair daughter of Hellas whose eyes and feet are like those of the hind. I love you."

She was that beautiful one I had seen, near the gate of the legion at Sela. She spake:

"I am Mary of Magdala, and I know that you are she beloved by my friend Apollos."

I answered, "I am that Doris who shared his perils and came out of the wilderness with him, but I fear that I shall see him not again."

Mary revived my hope with the words: "Be of good cheer. Our Master hath a mighty power. There is nothing hidden from Him. He knoweth of your love and folly and shame and fears and sorrows. It is the love in you which hath kept your soul alive and brought it to His feet. Such love is a great leaven, for it giveth all, even life itself, for the friend it seeks. I know that love, my sister, and if it be well placed it is a goodly treasure leading unto better things. It pleases Him, for He hath taught us that the love of a man for a woman and a woman for a man can be as a candle to carry the light of the Lord. If it be unselfish love that halts not at sacrifice it grows and spreads and deepens and its children shall weave a neighborhood into one family. And its spirit shall go abroad to distant places and hasten the time when those, far and near, shall be

brothers. The beginning of all this is the love between men and women leavened with the charity and grace of our Master."

As we went on in the multitude, she told me that He had not long to stay with us and that we must weave his followers into one brotherhood, loving and helping each other and all men. It would be as a great lantern filled with the new light shining to the ends of the earth, to be committed to our children and to their children forever, and that soon He would return in glory from Heaven to help us.

I promised that I and my children should be given to that purpose, and this Mary of Magdala now said to me: "Tarry not here, where evil men may seek to do you harm, but go with Nehemiah to his home and thence journey northward to all the villages on the great road and apart from it and tell of the mighty things you have seen, and such light as the Lord hath given you let it shine in your words. And this I would have you do; keep the hope in you that on a day no man can tell, Apollos will come to share your work and your joy until death shall part you, for this is that thing which I shall not cease to try to bring about."

Now Nehemiah had come up to Jerusalem with laden asses. He and I went down the road into the dusty waste to wait for Marsitas who went into the city to bring the beasts. And it chanced as we left the multitude and turned our faces toward the far valley we fell in with Bartimæus and his daughter who had come up on foot to Jerusalem for another look at the mighty One and had been of those in the Temple. We went on our way together, talking of the things we had seen and suddenly Bartimæus seized my arm and drew me

quickly aside. A viper lay in my way, and I, not seeing the serpent, was about to put my sandals down upon it.

"I thank my God," he said, "that those eyes, quickened by His mercy, have been able to serve one who led me out of the darkness."

It was a requiting to be remembered and the first fruit of my new life, that step halted by his hand, for it had been death to be bitten by the viper. And there are many I have known who have had the will to thank their God for the quickened eyes of Bartimæus.

Marsitas came with the asses and we mounted two of them and rode on down through the slanting desert as the night fell. How happy I was to be riding toward that love-filled home and my little son and the great task which my Master had given me through the lips of Mary! Henceforward I was to be known in many lands as "The Story-Teller."

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE TERROR OF A DOOMFUL DAY AND THE HOME OF BARDANES

NEXT morning on a donkey which Nehemiah had given me, my little son and I journeyed to a distant village called Rock Oreb and my dear friends came with me to establish me with certain of their kin who dwelt there. One of these was Miriam's sister who received us with great joy, and when the day ended all the people of the village gathered around a blazing fire in front of her house and listened far into the night while I related these stories of the desert and the thorny ways which had led at last to the feet of my Master.

And when I, standing in the midst of them, told of the healing of Marsitas and Bartimæus and repeated the words, which had been as water to my thirsting soul, a power not of this world, I am sure, descended upon me. And there was not one who heard me who did not share and confess my faith.

Now Miriam and Nehemiah returned to their home next day, but certain of those who had listened journeyed with me to a neighboring village and made me known to their friends, and again, as before, I told my stories and with a like result. So I went on with my little son through eastern Judea and Samaria to Meidan and Amathus and Ragaba and thence across the borders of Galilee.

As I journeyed the people warned me of a mighty bandit of the name of Bardanes who dwelt in the mountain fastnesses and had many followers, all expert with the bow and spear. They rode upon fleet horses and made the highways a place of peril at night.

Here and there some sullen priest or zealous Pharisee would question and oppose me and I was able to answer him without anger albeit in a fashion which put him to silence. As the fruit of my labors many came into the fold.

How well I remember that doomful day which began hot and breathless! What a stillness was in the air as I traveled! Passing a grove of oaks and sycamores, with a garden beyond, I heard a little bird singing sorrowfully. I stopped and listened and when I went on it followed me singing as before and the notes of its song were like seed sown in my soul and growing quickly into melancholy thoughts. My heart was strangely troubled. What wings were in the air, I wonder, bringing messages from the distant city?

Soon the sun was darkened while it was yet day and then the earth shook beneath us so that my donkey stopped, trembling with fear. I dismounted and sat upon the ground and saw and felt it waving as does the sea at the beginning of a tempest. And I heard a clatter like that of a thousand chariots speeding on a stone-paved road. I and my little son cried out in alarm.

I was too ill to tell my stories that night, but the people came in great numbers to hear me and there was much piping and dancing in front of the house of Simon, the merchant with whom I lodged, and wonder-talk of the day darkness, and the earthquake. An old

bearded astrologer told how the sun and the moon had had a battle in the sky which had shaken the world. The cause of it, he said, was jealousy. The moon had tried to prevent her rival from shining on the world and had driven him from the heavens, but the sun had returned and put the moon to flight.

The young men, fine, stalwart youths of the folds and vineyards, played in pairs a game of tossing stones at a mark on the ground and the defeated one had to bear the other on his shoulders up and down before the cheering crowd. A man who was a priest, converted to the new faith, told of seeing Jesus, when the even was come and His day's task was ended, stand watching the young at play, with smiles of joy on His face. And then I declared that the great aim of my Master was to make all men as happy as the young whose souls are as yet unburdened; that He would have us like those who leave their tasks to play. And they marveled at the thought that He was above all a Sorrow Killer and an Ender of Troubles for men and for nations—the troubles of the poor, the wicked, the oppressed, the sorrows of the afflicted and their kindred.

Now on the morrow a post rider from Jerusalem—one of those known as the hurricane—passed, with news of the shameful death of my Master on a cross. I was not surprised, but again I was overwhelmed with sorrow until these words which I had heard from His lips came up out of the depths of my spirit:

“Be of good cheer.”

Since then I have learned from many witnesses that He loved these words and spoke them often, oftener indeed than any others. I thought of the strange events which had come to pass in my journey of the day

before and of the mysterious power that dwells in this thing we call the spirit. My sorrow was heart-breaking, but was relieved by the knowledge that after three days He would rise and be with His people. Now I was not of those who saw the risen Lord, albeit they were many, but there has been no day since the time appointed when I have not felt His presence.

There was a great tumult in the village where I tarried over these tidings, and some went about as did Hadadrimmon in the Vale of Megiddon, rending their garments and wailing aloud. And there were those who said that if He had been the Messenger of God He would have had the power to save Himself from such a fate.

Now there was a Roman who had accepted the faith in Cæsarea Philippi and who came to me with bitter complaint of the Jews, but I rebuked him, bearing witness, as my stories have done, to the truth that only the men of place and power and their ignorant hirelings had put our Master to death and, privily, without the knowledge of the people. The jealousy of Rome, with the help of its Judean favorites, had destroyed His body but His spirit would still be traveling in all the roads of the world. He had come to bring peace and good will to men and no true friend of the Master would allow his heart to cherish wrath and bitterness because of the thing those evil men had done. They had sown the seed of their own punishment. Soon or late it would overwhelm them.

Now I, who had suffered much from the Jews, kept my heart clean through all those evil days. Were not my Master and my lover Jews? I had seen much of those people and had found them mostly like Apollos—

big in mind and body, gentle-hearted, seeking the spirit of God and ever mindful of it. They had been trodden down and robbed and cruelly mistreated, but through it all they had kept their faith and vision and that had given them a certain greatness of soul. And it came to me those days that theirs was the only soil in the world in which the seed of my Master could first have been sown with any hope of a harvest.

I went on with my task albeit with no good effect, the people being so wrought up by the tidings from Jerusalem and the arrival of a false prophet claiming the power of Jesus. I tarried long with a friend of the faith, who was sick of a fever, and gave her loving care until she was well again. Then word came from Nehemiah by post that Apollos was free and that he was waiting for me at the house of Miriam's brother in Jerusalem. Moreover he said that Jesus had risen and had been seen by certain of the faithful. The news filled my heart with joy and straightway I set out for Jericho, from Beisan upon the long valley road from the far north, traveling with a caravan, as great disorder was reported along the highways and bandits were said to be infesting the lonely places.

It was a memorable night that I spent with my friends Nehemiah and Miriam at their home near the first milestone north of Jericho. They told me of the seizure of Jesus by night, of the perfidy of Judas, of the trial before Pilate and the High Priest, of the mockery and cruelty of those bitter men, of the death on the cross, of the going of Mary of Magdala and the other women to the tomb (O the women! I think that they will be no longer as the dead among the living), and of the return of our Master to certain

of His beloved ones on the road to Emmaus. They said that James, the son of Zebedee, and Apollos, now free and well in Jerusalem and eager to see me, had told of these things in a secret meeting of the faithful when Nehemiah had been present.

Bartimæus, who had been commanded to hold his peace, had continued to tell of the great miracle by the roadside. He and his daughter were now refugees dwelling in a cave on a cliffside in the deep gorge of the Wady Sidr up the road to Jerusalem, for the Romans were seeking him to cast him into prison on the charge of sedition. Nehemiah left food for them at a certain place near the road on his journeys to the great city.

It chanced that while I tarried with these friends a rich Pharisee of the old faith came to buy a store of fruit for his palace in Jericho. He saw me walking with my boy in the grove and asked Nehemiah: "Is not she the young woman of whom I have heard much from my friend Teron?"

And Nehemiah answered: "Sir, I know not. She is a traveler from the north and a good woman."

Then said the Pharisee: "It can be no other. Teron says that she is one of the fairest creatures that walk the earth, and I swear, by the wives of Solomon, he is not far wrong."

I was in the house with Miriam when Nehemiah entered, his countenance touched with anger and alarm, to report these evil tidings, and when he had finished the telling he said:

"This man of my own race who has bartered his soul to the Romans is ever like a serpent in your path. We must take thought of him and without delay. He drinketh iniquity like water. He hath hidden his heart

from the truth and made his bed in darkness. I have seen him but once since he left us in the Temple, rebuked by our Master. I ventured to tell him that he had misjudged us, and as I spoke I was like one kneeling because of his pride and power. He gave me a sneering laugh and said that the man Jesus was a clever lawyer; that His wit had saved my life. 'But I warn you,' he said, 'if you get in my way again you shall be food for dogs.'

"Ever since that day in the Temple I have trembled and groaned in my dreams and done my tasks and eaten my food in fear, knowing, as I do, the evil heart of that man and the power of him."

Out of the depths of my spirit I exclaimed: "Oh, this body—this body of mine! It is the cause of all our troubles. What now shall I do with it?"

"This night you must go to Jerusalem. I will send with you a trusty man, for it is impossible that I should go, Miriam being so heavy with her child. It will be safer for you to make the journey by night, and it were better that you be disguised, both because of the bandits and the serpent of Jericho."

Then it was that Miriam searched the house for garments fit only for use in the rough toil of the groves and vineyards. When she had brought them to me I saw her plan and fell in with it. Before the day ended I put on the gray wig and padded tunic and shabby outer garments of a Jewish farm woman, of middle age, and dyed my hair and eyebrows. With this disguise and my knowledge of the Aramaic dialect of the common folk, I felt that I could safely make my way to Jerusalem.

I waddled about and talked in the fashion of certain

poor country women I had met in my travels, whereupon Miriam and Nehemiah and their sons and daughters laughed and clapped their hands and Miriam said:

"I swear, by the soul of my father, you could fill even Rome or Antioch with laughter. In the light of torches you would fool the eye of the eagle. Give yourself no heart sickness over the little lad. I will be his mother until Apollos or some other can come for him. It makes my tongue sore to say it were better for you not to return to our house."

The donkeys were on the roadside as soon as the darkness had fallen, ready to carry me and my guide across the little desert up to the great city. A long time I stood with my friends by the gate while we took counsel together. I had left my child asleep in the house and had turned away with a heavy heart. We mounted and set out. As we urged our beasts toward the city I could dimly see another mounted person some two or three hundred cubits ahead. Now, I knew that it could be no one who had lately passed in the highway, else should we have seen him by the light of the stars shining with unusual brightness. Therefore the thought came to me that a spy of Teron had been lying in wait. I hurried my donkey into a gallop with the hope of passing the mysterious rider, but with no success, for he set his pace to mine and would yield no part of his lead.

We followed him through Jericho, lighted by many lamps, and no person in the streets gave us even a look, it appeared. We crossed the Wady el Kelt, and when we turned into the great highway to Jerusalem, I saw him ahead riding slowly, as we rode. Suddenly he gave the lash and rein to his beast, whether horse

or donkey I was not able to know, and went out of sight. Had he gone on, or was he hiding in some thicket by the roadside until we should pass?

After riding a long time in silence with no sign of enemies, the worry of these thoughts wore away and I looked up at the friendly stars, filled with wonder, as I had done a hundred times in my night travels, but with a new feeling now that I had seen the Son of the Most High, who had so filled the heavens, and knew that He loved me. From Him I had got a notion of immeasurable power and now, as I looked upward, the thought came to me that there were distances which all the highways and desert trails and ship journeys of the world, joined end to end, could not penetrate. I remembered the high tower in Damascus which I had seen when I was there with my father.

How little it had looked from the far plain, south of the city; and how it grew, as we went on, until I stood by its base filled with awe! And when we came near the city, as the night fell, I remembered that its top was up in the sunlight. So the stars, which seem to be so little, were, perchance, very great things and up so high in the roof of the world that the sun shone upon them from beyond its edge while we were down in the shadows. Therefore, could not Heaven be a place where there was no darkness, and were not these vast shining isles of light a part of its kingdom? That restless searching and reaching after truth had begun in my soul, and now, having seen the Messenger and become, as I felt, a member of His family, I had a new interest in the great estate to which I was to be one of many heirs.

Then a flash of torches by the near roadside! A

rude ending of my reverie, when these fancies seemed to tumble into ruins on the floor of my imagination! We stopped our beasts and quickly discovered that the dark figures of men were on every side. Our bridles were seized, while other men who had been hiding in a cave came toward us bearing torches. I knew that we had fallen among thieves and feared only the loss of our donkeys, but I knew not then, as in time I came to know, how distinguished was our company, for it was no other than the most famous bandit of that time, the terror of the mountains, of whom many a tale had been told to me by the old wives on my journey. We were in the presence of Bardanes and his band.

Now this Bardanes had done the most daring deeds. He had overcome a troop of Roman cavalry, and, having taken them blindfolded to his hidden fortress, had stripped them and written, in black paint on the back of each, insulting messages to Cæsar and the Legatus Legionis in Jerusalem. Then he had borne them to the highway by night and left them thereby, bound and naked but unharmed, so that their backs proclaimed his contempt for the Romans.

I knew that we had been stopped near the deep gorge of the Wady Sidr, then partly filled by rain, for I could hear the sound of its flowing.

In a moment I saw a man approaching me, his face under a mask. He came near and raised his torch and surveyed me and the shabby hireling of Nehemiah. Then, lifting a hairy fist, he exclaimed:

“Nothing but a pair of swine herders!”

His form and carriage, his hairy fist, and the great bow on his shoulder were familiar, and when I heard

his voice I recognized the mighty bowman of Furoras's band whom I had known in the far desert. How often had I seen that hairy hand holding aloft a wriggling serpent or scorpion for the amusement of Furoras and his wives and warriors! That able association of robbers had no doubt broken up and drifted apart after their great chief had failed to return to them. His had been the master mind of that evil tribe.

He looked upon us and our beasts with an expression of amusement.

"Whither go you?" he asked of me.

"To Jerusalem," I answered in my dialect.

"Go on," said he with a laugh.

Our donkeys had not time to lift a foot before a horseman came over the top of the hill in the south and raced down the slope toward us. I had scarcely tightened my rein when in our midst he checked his Arabian horse, saying that a troop was coming fast, close behind him. Then I saw a stir of men which filled me with astonishment. Some twenty of them rushed out of the shadows and strung heavy ropes across the highway and swiftly the lights were hidden and we were in darkness. I had scarcely drawn a breath, when the expected horsemen were galloping down the slope. The ropes had shut us in and we stood waiting by the roadside for an adventure as strange as any of these of which I have told. Suddenly a torch flashed in the road not twenty cubits from me, and a loud voice shouted the word:

"Hold!"

Then the riders tugged the reins and their horses hit the ropes at a slackened pace. Never have I seen such a tumble of men and beasts. Quickly both were

seized—four men and four horses—and the torches streamed about us. In a moment I heard a laugh from the mighty bowman of Furoras and his voice:

"Men, the ruler of Jericho will honor us with a visit. His name is Teron. Many a time I have seen him buying and selling, and singing holy songs in the Temple. Five thousand shekels for a week's starving will be cheap for a man of his taste and riches. The benefit to his health will be worth twice that sum."

The frightened Teron had risen to his feet. One side of his face was bleeding and smeared with dirt. On his breast was the golden bar of a ruler and a symbol of his sect and piety. His black robe was rent and covered with dust. He looked at the strong men who encircled him and his hirelings. I knew then that his purpose had been to seize me as he had been seized. His own counsel had cast him down.

"Quick, now, the blinders!" the bowman shouted.

Leathern blinders, lined with lamb's wool, were tightly bound upon the heads of the four captives. Each man was put on a horse and his hands shackled to the saddle; then a robber mounted behind him. Last of all, the bowman came and put on my blinder, and said:

"Old wife, Bardanes will not slight you. He leaves no talebearer. Can you mount behind me?"

Seizing his arm, I sprang to my place.

"You are a spry old dame," he laughed. Then he tied my wrists to his girdle on either side of him.

As we left the highway, taking to the sands, he asked: "Why do you tremble so?"

"I am afraid," I answered.

"Be not afraid. Bardanes is a friend of the poor. He will do you no harm and soon you shall be back with your geese and chickens."

The assurance calmed my fears for a little time, being so fairly spoken, but soon it came to me that the sincerity of a bandit chief was no secure foundation for my safety, and I asked myself what would befall me if my disguise were penetrated. Then, as we rode on in silence, I made my plans.

A long time we rode, our horses' feet muffled by the desert sands, and suddenly I heard the dull roar of the firm earth beneath us, then a clatter of hoofs on a stony highway. We began rocking in a swift gallop and the noise of the spurning feet beneath and around me was like the sound of a hurricane in a forest. We scampered down the slope from the highway to a turfed level, where I heard the rustling of reeds and grasses. Soon we were rushing up a mountain path. The slant, increasing, slowed the feet of our beast and soon he labored, as did those behind us, in short, clinging steps, and groaned beneath his burden. By and by we gained the summit, I thought, for the ground was level and a strong breeze fell upon us. Down into deep vales and up rocky slopes we proceeded in that mysterious mountain journey. I think that it must have been in the third watch of the night that we entered an echoing rock chamber in the mountains, wherein, having advanced more than a hundred cubits, as I reckoned, the horses stopped and the bandit dismounted, saying:

"Old woman, here is one of my palaces. Jump down, and soon I will show you to your bedroom."

I leaped to the rock floor and the famous Bardanes

removed my blinder. The great cavern was lighted with many torches, by the glow of which I could see far aloft in the darkness but not to the roof above. I stood alone, sore from my long ride, while the horses were led away.

Not twenty cubits from my position was a group of bandits and in their midst stood the ruler of Jericho and his captured hirelings. It was my privilege to hear and enjoy the negotiations between Teron and Bardanes, for it is my duty to confess that I had not yet the grace in me to love my enemies, and I heard the great chief say:

"It is little enough; five thousand for you and five thousand for your servants."

And then the voice of Teron: "It is a vast sum. I cannot pay so much."

Bardanes answered quickly: "I need not the money and I would have more pleasure in tanning your skin for wallets and feeding your flesh to jackals, you robber of the poor. In truth, I'd rather invent a just death for you than to have your rotten gold in my hands."

I saw Bardanes turn away and say to his fellows: "Put him in the deep pit where I keep my pets." Then to the ruler he added: "Your bedfellows shall be scorpions and serpents."

The strong men of the chief had seized the reluctant ruler to drag him to the pit, when he cried out with terror in his voice: "You shall have the sum you ask. Bring me pen and ink and vellum, and you shall choose the words that I write to my banker."

Bardanes answered: "Skinflint! You shall make it a thousand more for your dallying."

Now when the pen and ink and vellum were brought, Teron knelt by a small table and wrote, while men stood on either side of him with torches, and the famous chief chose out the words to be written. They were these:

I am in a city of the north where I have had some trouble with an old friend, because of my fondness for his favorite lady, and am in immediate need of eleven thousand shekels in gold. Please deliver them to the man who presents this writing. As it is a matter which might compel me to face the great Imperator in Rome, where the troubles of a Jew are a thing to be laughed at, I wish you to pay the sum without question or any manner of embarrassment to the messenger. If you do not observe this request with scrupulous care, I shall be ruined.

I smiled as I thought how plausible was all this with Caius, a nephew and favorite of Tiberius Cæsar, then in Galilee. I began to comprehend that the success of Bardanes was due to the keenness of his wit as well as to his intimate knowledge of the geography of the land and of the men who were making its history.

Immediately a messenger, mounted on a fresh horse, came out of the darkness at the side of the cavern. Now, this messenger was a bearded dwarf with a hump on his back, and Bardanes said to him: "My son, make haste. This man shall be living on a crust of bread and a cup of water a day until you return with the gold."

The messenger departed. Teron must have made some protest, for I heard Bardanes say: "Hungry? I am glad to hear you say it. That is good for a man of your flesh. Eat your own fat for a few days. It will improve your looks. You are one of the great

hunger breeders of Judea. Before you part with me you shall know how it tastes."

Teron and his three companions were led away into the darkness beyond me. I watched the torch of their armed leaders go far into the heart of the mountain and vanish as they turned aside. Soon I was shown to my own lodgings—a small chamber of the great cave, where my bed was a number of sheepskins spread on a side. There for a long time I dwelt in darkness and fear, but suffered no harm, and that because of my dialect and the witchlike look of me, I doubt not.

Lying and sitting there in the silence and the black, perpetual night, my eyes and ears had pleasant occupation. And what think you it was that I saw and heard? How could I have done otherwise than turn to those great treasures in my memory—the face and form and voice of my beloved Master? Again He came down the road in the morning light and spake to Bartimæus. Again He came up to Solomon's Porch and chose His place and sat down with the people. Again he spake those undying words to the awed Pharisees and to me, and again I wept. Again I heard that mighty song from the heart of Judea and the music of that voice, filled with love and kindness and unfathomable wisdom! Thus was He with me and thus has He ever been. And the thought came that thus would He be with all believers, even with you who read these lines, my beloved, though it were a thousand years from now, for by this bequest I do make my memories your own. Have not my eyes beheld the dearest friend and brother of all men?

And this strange thing had come to pass. I thought

often of Apollos, and the query forced itself upon me, Did I love him or my Master the more?

As often as I had need of it, a tall Ishmaelite, in the familiar dress of the desert, brought me a generous supply of bread and water and stood near with his torch until I had eaten and drunk my fill, and looked to my comfort in other ways.

Well I remember the last hour of my imprisonment. I had smeared my face with dust before I was brought out to the great, lighted chamber where, as soon as my eyes could endure the glow of torches, I saw the masked chief sitting by a table on which were heaps of golden coins. He was counting them as I approached him. He turned and looked up at me and cried out:

"Old woman, by the gods in the sky, I am said to be brave, but the look of you unmans me! Take these coins and go, and when you speak of Bardanes try to find a kind word for him, and if you see a man who is hungry, give him of my money and tell him that I am a friend of the poor and that I rob only the robbers of the people."

He put coin after coin in a little sack made, I think, of goatskin, with a loop of string attached to it, and bade me hang it on my neck. And when I had done this he turned to his task, saying: "I give you a horse for yourself and son. He is lame but will be able to carry you. My man will put you on the road to Jerusalem."

Now, one thing I had observed as I stood surveying the singular man, and not until now have I mentioned it, in fear of helping his enemies, for though it be a sin, I confess that he had won my sympathy. It was an evil calling he had, but was there not a kind of grace in

his spirit that lifted him far above the men who sought to capture him and take his life? And this was the thing I observed; his hands were now hairless. The thought came to me that they had been smoothly shorn. Doubtless the hairy hands were only for evil deeds. With smooth hands he went among the people, for it is certain that he was often in the cities.

The blinders were made fast to our heads. Our horse was led into the light and when we were mounted our hands were bound with small chains to the saddle. Our guide set out, leading our horse behind his.

I knew not how sweet was the air of the wind-swept sky until we rode out of the great cavern and felt the touch of a breeze blowing over the land. I longed for a look at the earth and the heavens. Hour after hour we traveled up and down the slopes. I knew by the feel of my horse when we were approaching the highway. He had ceased to be listless. We stopped and our leader dismounted.

He came and took the little sack of coins from my neck, saying in a whisper: "My chief bade you give them to the first hungry man you met. I am he. Bardanes is fond of a merry jest. With all my heart I thank you for this generosity."

He released our hands, loosed the blinders, removed them, and walked hurriedly away, singing as he went:

Oh my beloved, good-by!
The road is near,
And at the end of it
May you find happiness!

Now for a time the benevolence of the chief made me laugh and rather merrily for one in my plight. Then

I began to think seriously of the matter. Bardanes was not a playful cynic as this follower of his would have me believe, for I felt in my soul that his words had come from his heart. Our guide in taking the gold had been unfaithful to his chief.

Not often in this life of mine have I felt a keener joy than that which came to me when, in the great Roman highway from Damascus to Jerusalem, I saw the sunlight flooding over the far range of Gilead into the blue sky and touching the green heights.

Now it befell that Teron returning to Jerusalem and Jericho had spread abroad the news of his capture and of the ransom he had been compelled to pay, and many troops of soldiers had been sent to search the mountains of Judea and Samaria. Nehemiah had gone up to the great city and, learning that neither I nor his hireling had been seen there, came by the truth that we also had fallen into the hands of the bandits. He had divined the reason for my capture and assured his friends that Bardanes would wash his hands of me and the hireling soon after the rich man had paid his ransom. He saw not Apollos or the sister of Miriam with whom my lover lodged, they having journeyed with certain others to Emmaus to see where the Master had come down and to pray for the Blessed Vision.

A man had overtaken us on his way to Jerusalem. He spoke to me pleasantly. As I could not go his pace, my horse being lame, I asked him to go to the house of Miriam's sister and tell her that Doris would be coming that night. This he did.

So it came to pass that Apollos on his horse rode out from Jerusalem to meet me. I saw him coming hard by the tenth milestone when the sun was low.

Never had he looked so fair to me as when he held up his hand halting us. He was like the tower of David, of the strength and comeliness of which one time he had told me. He dismounted and shook the dust from his embroidered robe. I declare that I never saw a nobler human form and countenance. I could have cried out for joy but held my peace, being suddenly beset with pride, and he said:

"Good woman, whence come you?"

My old passion was upon me. I could have kissed his feet and wept. How quickly the lie came to my lips, in the dialect of a Jewish country wife:

"From the far north."

"Have you heard or seen aught of a young lady, fair to look upon, lately released by bandits?"

Looking like an old witch as I did, and covered with dust, I could not acknowledge myself to my beloved one. In spite of all the thorns and nettles, in spite even of the heavenly light which had flooded into my soul, suddenly the old spirit of folly and vanity held me in its bondage.

I dared not trust myself to answer him in words, so by signs I indicated that she had gone on to Jerusalem. He turned his horse and rode slowly toward the city in silence a little way ahead. Never can I forget the joy of coming near him. I began choosing words—Greek, Homeric words into which I could pour the fullness of my heart. He halted to tighten his saddle girth. I rode on, my tongue aching to speak out. In the silence my soul was calling him. The shadows of the falling night thickened. I preferred to tell him when he could not see me clearly; I would not let him pass again. I dismounted and washed my face with

the contents of my water bottle and perfumed myself with musk. I looked back, but was not able to see Apollos, he being far behind. Suddenly a troop of cavalry thundered up the highway out of a deep vale and went by.

I rode on slowly, but my lover came not. Darkness fell as black as my own remorse. A great fear had come to me when, at last, I saw the lights of the city.

CHAPTER IX

THE RAGE OF PIOUS MEN AND THE DEATH OF STEPHEN

MIRIAM's sister was that Rachel beloved of the faithful in those evil days. She lived in a little house beyond the Joppa gate and her husband was one Phineas, a weaver. Near the end of the first watch of the night I came to their door and received a glad welcome. My dear one had waited there anxiously and patiently for my coming, and had gone out to meet me. And when I had told them of my sinful pride on the Roman highway, they made light of it, saying that he would soon be with us.

We lay on the rugs in their one room, with a lamp burning in the midst, and talked of the mighty doings which had fallen into this little span of our lives. Jerusalem had been noisy with rage and tumult since the slaying of our Master. They told me that the walled hilltops had been shaken like a winnower's basket when the Christ was dying. The priests and those behind them and the Pharisees were now stern and certain of our growing flock had been slain. Apollos had been warned for teaching in the Temple that the words of Jesus were for the whole world.

The priests and Pharisees and all learned in the law would have it that the one God, being a discovery of the Jews, was only for the children of Abraham. They took His favor with a swinish greed and would have none of it given to other races.

It was a time to try the souls of the faithful. Save for His rising and appearing to certain of the well beloved, many would have lost heart, for the Great Light had been flickering in the darkness and in danger of going out. Now it was burning brighter than ever it had burned. Many of the disciples had gone to Galilee. Peter and John had returned and for days Peter had been teaching in the Temple and telling of the risen Master and had accused those guilty of His death. And that morning power had been given him to heal a man lame from his birth at a gate of the Temple, whereat the priests and the rich rulers had taken offense—alarmed by the spread of the new faith—and had cast Peter and others into prison. The priests and officials had seen the danger to them of such power in the hand and tongue of Peter. They called it the gift of Beelzebub and were resolved to make an end of it.

Now, having heard these things, I was alarmed for Apollos, who had not arrived, and in the middle watch of the night went to the housetop with a rug and blanket to look for his coming. I waited there until the stars faded in the morning light, filled with a great fear, and he came not. Still I kept my place by the house wall until the day's life began and my friends were stirring. Then, in tears over a dead hope, I went below and said to Rachel and Phineas:

"I feel sure that the troop of soldiers who passed while I was on the highway were seeking my beloved. It is the punishment of my wicked vanity."

And Rachel sought to comfort me, saying: "My blessed one, think not ill of yourself. We are only human beings, even with the grace of God in us. You

did only what I would have done. How quick was He to forgive the folly of women! If He were here with us, would He not say, 'Be of good cheer, go and sin no more?'"

"Now is it hard to be of good cheer," I answered. "The mighty power of Rome has been turned to the task of putting out the light of the world, and I fear that we who hold the candle will be destroyed."

Then Phineas lifted his hand and spake with a gift of faith that amazed me—how often have I felt it in my time!—saying:

"Think you the will of God can be defeated? I tell you that even Rome shall be as the dust beneath the wheels of His chariot."

While we ate our bread together, Rachel said to me:

"My sister Miriam was here two days ago and many pleasant things she told me of your little son, that he is well and fond of play and quick to learn."

In that school in Jerusalem, long before, my fingers had acquired a certain deftness in weaving and here and there on my travels I had practiced the art. So while I waited for Apollos I kept my hands busy on the looms of Phineas. My work and my friends, the number of whom was increasing daily, preserved me from madness and despair, for those of the new faith were banded to help and comfort each other. Often we met together to tell of our witnessing and to get news of those in distant parts brought by messengers. Our earnings were put in a common fund and the comfort and welfare of each was the aim of all.

There Stephen told us of the miraculous delivery of Peter from prison, and a power not of this world was

on his tongue. And among us were many widows and other women in sore need of love and help. I spoke not, nor did any other of my sex, in these meetings, save when we were questioned and then briefly, it being thought more becoming for women to listen and hold their peace before the altar. Albeit much was said, and well said, of the loving sympathy of our Master for women.

I remember a day when Philip spoke of the fidelity and courage of those women, Mary of Magdala and Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children, and many others—the only friends of Jesus who followed Him up to that bloody place and stood beyond the rabble and the soldiers looking on and mourning as He died. So women must never seek in vain for help and comfort and protection in the folds of the Great Shepherd. Thereafter our witnessing was more in request, but we kept our humility.

It was in this meeting that a messenger from Cæsarea told of what was passing in Herod's port. It came out that Apollos, the teacher of Gerasa, had been seized by Roman soldiers and brought there and cast into prison. Phineas arose and denounced the act, speaking with the boldness of the old prophets, against the wickedness of Jerusalem.

It is likely that spies were in our midst, for that evening Rachel and Phineas and I were seized by a band of Pharisees and cast into prison. The leader of the band was that young captain of the raiders who had leaped over the walls of Marsitas's fold. His face and form and voice I could not forget, for they were stamped in my memory as with a burning brand,

and here I would describe him. He was of short stature and strongly built. His neck and shoulders stooped a little. His hairy, angry countenance and passionate voice, that had in them that night a suggestion of the ferocity of a fighting dog, had haunted my dreams. His sallow face was half hidden by a thick, dark beard. Above his eyes, black as a starless night, was a line of thick hair, joined above his nose, that marked the base of his broad brow. He was in the dress of a rich city dweller and he spoke in the Aramaic tongue. His face and figure suggested the strength of a mighty oak.

We were thrust into dank, dark places under the earth and put on such an allowance of bread and water as one gets when supplies are nearly gone in the great waste. I was hunger-bitten, my tongue swollen with thirst, when, after some days, we were brought before the magistrate and one Saul of Tarsus was called upon to voice the complaint against us.

Then arose the young man, who with others of his sect had seized us. He said in a voice now calm and pleasant to the ear:

“O heart of Cæsar that loveth justice and submission to the law! These people in their ignorance are followers of that false prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, and disturbers of the peace. This man has publicly denounced, in bitter words, the priests and rulers of the city and for the reason that they caused an old offender against the law to be removed to Cæsarea. The wife of this man hath caused much domestic trouble by going about among the women of the Jews, and leading them away from the faith of their fathers. This other woman hath an ill fame and is now of those

who would claim respectability on the pretense that they have been born again. She had a child and is said to have sacrificed it to this new god; but of that I have no certain knowledge. She is a coworker of the wife of Phineas, the weaver, and an instigator of disturbances not good for the city."

Phineas and I answered these charges and with such a strength of well-chosen words and calmness of spirit that the man Saul looked upon us with astonishment and the magistrate said: "These are not ignorant people."

Whereupon I answered: "O heart of Cæsar! No one can be called ignorant who hath felt the hand and grace of our Master, for thereafter the light is in him and he is linked with the source of all knowledge and power."

Then said the magistrate: "Because you are not ignorant I find it the harder to forgive you. We must have peace in Jerusalem. You followers of the false prophet are a disturbing force in the city. You are not like beasts who dumbly follow. You have intelligence. I ask you to use it and to leave this way of error into which you have strayed. The religion of your fathers is sufficient for you, as it was for them. Promise to forsake the doctrines of the false prophet and you shall have your liberty."

Quickly the words came to me: "That we cannot do, for we know that He is of God and what would it profit us to gain the whole world and lose our souls? I know whereof I speak, O friend of Cæsar! I am hungry and I burn with thirst, yet would I rather keep my misery and die with it than give up my faith."

And when I had finished, Phineas added that he and his wife were of a like mind.

Now there sat in the court a white-bearded, gentle-faced old man in a priest's robe. His bared head was large, domelike, and bald. We were taken to the rear of the room and there held while he conferred privily with Saul and the magistrate, and I heard one of the Roman guards say to another that he was Gamaliel, the wisest and most learned man among the Jews.

We were taken back to the prison and near the end of the day Saul came to question us, and finding our firmness unabated, asked that food and water be given us and went away. My friends were in a delirium of thirst fever when the filled cups and bread were brought to us. I, being younger and acquainted with the great peril of the desert traveler, was not so sorely tried. With what quivering eagerness we drank! The bread was, as always, a disappointment in like times of distress. If the tongue and palate are half parched, they have a kind of numbness. Our repast was scarcely finished when we were set free.

We reeled with weakness on our way to the house of Phineas. Nehemiah and Miriam were there awaiting our return. Our neighbors of the faith came to us with offerings of milk and bread and honey and we went to the housetop, the evening being warm, and ate and drank and talked together, we who had suffered being temperate in our self-indulgence, for fear of the hunger death.

And Miriam gave me good news of my little son. He and their children had been left in the keeping of Bartimæus and his daughter who had returned to

the vineyards. And I asked: "Is Bartimæus no more in danger of being cast into prison?"

Then said Nehemiah: "The ferment in Jericho has passed. The serpent is sick. The night of his return he and his friends had a great banquet. His meat turned to stone in him, and since then his belly has had no quietness. He is belching out his life on a bed of pain. His fat has turned to leanness. I have seen him lying in his litter by the street side. His face has the color of a hide just out of the tanning vat and his mouth is filled with a kind of yelping."

And Miriam kissed me and said: "The swinish greed of his belly is like that of the soul of the Pharisees. It would devour the grace and mercy and peace of God and leave none for other races. But for all this he would have been pursuing you, my beloved, and, perchance, he would have had you in his power."

Then said Phineas: "I swear by the power of God who hath hung the world upon nothing, that it was a wise Prophet who said: 'I have seen the impious highly exalted and raising himself like the cedars of Lebanon and I have passed by and, behold, he was not.'"

And Nehemiah said: "I have heard Romans in the market place laughing over the misfortunes of the ruler of Jericho. They call him an ill-smelling Jewish upstart and a louse on the body of Rome. I heard one of them say that if Bardanes would only rob all the Hebrew skinflints of Judea, his statue would be in the house of Cæsar."

Now much was said among us that night of the mighty things that Peter had done in healing the sick, many of whom were daily brought to him on their

beds, and Nehemiah said that he spake with a power like that of our Master.

And Phineas: "Save the accursed Judas, all who knew Him and shared His counsel have been lifted up: ignorant fishermen, the poor vineyard worker, the hard publican at the receipt of customs, the unlearned shepherd. He gave them His spirit, His knowledge. It is the spirit in a man which maketh him great."

On the morrow we went to the Porch of Solomon and heard Peter speak, and when he arose I recognized in him the kindly rower who had taken me in a fisherman's boat to Tiberius that day of my bitter disappointment. He spake with a power I had never felt in the words of men, and told of the coming of an angel to open the door of his prison and how he and his friends were seized again for continuing to teach in the Temple. Then were they taken before the Great Council, in peril of death. And Peter gave us the words of the wise Gamaliel to his fellows on the Judgment Seat; and these were the words as I remember them:

O men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. I say unto you, restrain yourselves and let them alone; for if their counsel be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it and it would be ill if it should happen that ye be found fighting against the Almighty One.

How different would have been my task from now forward, if only the men of Israel had taken heed!

Now Stephen had been a friend of Apollos. He spoke often in the Temple and with a faith and power which brought many to our way of thinking. And

one evening he came and broke bread with us in the house of Phineas. His face and voice and figure reminded me of Apollos. And, like Apollos, he had spent much of his life in Athens. We talked long of old Hellas and of my lover and he promised soon to take me with him to Cæsarea where he had a Roman friend of great wealth and influence. Through him he hoped that we would be able to see Apollos and even secure a favorable judgment on the charge against him. He hoped also that many in the port of Herod would be ready to receive the faith. He added:

“It were well for me to warn you that my life is like foam on the waters, for I am bold in saying what the Spirit giveth me to say. I may be sooner in paradise than in Cæsarea, albeit if I live another day I shall have great hope for my people. This morning the die was cast and I know not how it has fallen, for I told the multitude what it were well for them to know, that the human heart is the true seat of the Shekinah and that if they refused God, manifest in His Messenger, neither holy customs nor the Temple itself could save them from His displeasure. It had to be said, and if one must die for saying it, then has he died well. We who have the honor of carrying His light must live well and die well, that being the example He hath given us.”

This man of faith and vision had not misread the signs. In the first watch of the night, while we sat on the rugs, a lamp burning dimly in our midst, came the dreaded Saul of Tarsus with a band of elders and Pharisees. They seized Rachel and Phineas and Stephen and took them to prison, leaving me alone in the house. I wondered why they left me. Was it

because I had not gone to the Temple that morning with Phineas and Rachel to hear the preaching?

Fearing to stay alone, I went to the home of a family of the faith living near and spent the night there. In the morning I went to the Council Chamber of the Sanhedrin and sat down to wait by its door, knowing that my friends would be brought there for trial. I saw the High Priest and his attendants and many of the rich and great—in rare and spotless linen—Hanan and Zadok and Hezekiah, the Galilean, and Menahem and Shimeon of Mesada and others. When they went abroad in the streets these men, famous for their wealth and power, were pointed out and regarded with awe. Then came Saul and his friends with Stephen walking in their midst and entered the chamber. And the face of Stephen was beautiful to behold.

Now as I sat there, through the open window I heard the charge against him, that he had declared that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the Temple and break down its ancient customs. And I heard Stephen speaking in his own defense, and in every one of those brave words, when a deep, inspired wrath was in his voice, I caught the tragic note of self-sacrifice. They were trumpet blasts of the eternal truth:

“The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”

“Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? O ye stiff-necked people! They have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.”

At the sound of this trumpet, the fore ranks in the long caravan of humanity crossed the border of the

desert in which for ages it had traveled. They had entered another world—one near to paradise, I would say. The spirit of man had, thereafter, a new courage and capacity; that of gladly and deliberately dying for the truth of God. And this without the excitement and the rewards of battle to urge it forward.

What a mystery is this thing we call the spirit of man! When I think of that day, those words of the sage of old have come to me: "Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul."

I heard the raging and gnashing of teeth and the stir of hurrying feet within the chamber. It was like the fury of wolves fighting over a dying roe.

The doors flew open and an angry group of witnesses rushed out, dragging the helpless Stephen in their midst, some clinging to his hands and arms, while others were pushing and beating and buffeting my friend from behind and all in a rage like that of frothing beasts. Even certain of those rich men howled and rent their garments and sprinkled dust upon their bared heads.

I was terror-stricken. I had not known that man, without the grace that my Master gave to him, can be the most terrible of all creatures. I stood trembling as these human wolves dragged their victim toward the city gate beyond the Porch of Solomon. Suddenly I was ashamed and I ran toward them. I knew that he would be stoned and the thought came to me that at least one friend should be with him. And I saw him kneel down and begin a prayer for those misguided men as the stones began to fall upon him. What a light was in his countenance when he was saying:

"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!"

When Stephen, crushed by the stones, lay dead on the ground, I saw the man Saul holding the garments of those who had slain my friend. And courage was given me to go to him, while the others, spattered with the blood of their victim, were venting their wrath on the lifeless body, and to say:

"It is a cruel thing you have done, O friend of Cæsar! You will learn that you cannot put out the Light of God by slaying His servants, for, mark you, to them death is no great matter."

Now I, looking upon Saul out of tearful eyes, had noted a change in his countenance. A rueful look was on it and he said to me:

"Be silent, my fair maid. I am no friend of Cæsar's, but I would be a friend of yours, and I could not bear to see another stoning. Go to the home of Phineas and there remain and I will come to talk with you of these things in your heart which you value more than your life. I am not able to understand it."

I answered: "If my friends Phineas and Rachel are to be slain, I shall stay and stand between them and the stoners and die with them, if need be, for I am every whit as guilty as they."

He turned to me with a look of astonishment.

"You would not be slighted?" he asked. "Compose yourself. Your friends will not come before the judges this day, nor is it likely that they will be slain. The charge against them is sedition, not blasphemy. Go quickly to the house of Phineas and come not forth again until the morrow."

I knew not the meaning of this, and had a fear that he was contriving mischief. But the look of his face

reassured me, so straightway I turned from those violent men, knowing my own heart and how swiftly a rash word would lift the stones and bring them down upon me.

I walked toward the gate, my heart heavy with its sorrow, and suddenly heard the words and music of a familiar Ishmaelite song. Long before then I had heard it in the desert and the voice on which it came to my ear. My astonishment stopped me, when I saw sitting by the wayside in the homely dress of a shepherd, No Name, the mighty bowman of Furoras' band, now, as I knew well, the dreaded Bardanes of the mountains. A basket woven of reeds stood beside him. He held a stick in his hands, both of which were as hairless as my own. He took the cover from his basket and invited me to look within. A large and very deadly serpent known as the hooded Naja lay coiled on its bottom.

"When the gentlemen come I will make him dance," he said, with the old familiar smile on his face.

He did not recognize me. I had been a child goddess radiant in rich colors when I dwelt with Furoras and his wives. Now I was a woman in the plain garments of those of my faith.

Had he come to Jerusalem to choose another victim? No doubt he wished to get acquainted with those wealthy citizens who would soon be returning from the execution of my friend. They came and I stood by while they watched him at play with the serpent and a number of scorpions which he carried in a leathern sack. I heard the tall, bearded Hanan, maker of High Priests, invite Bardanes to go with him to his home. He said:

"I think that my family and guests will be glad to see you playing with these singular pets of yours. I will give you two drachmæ for your trouble."

And Bardanes made it appear that a drachma was a matter of much importance to him, and in a pleading voice demanded three. Hanan agreed and the great bandit chief went away with those proud Sadducees, the basket on his elbow.

Thus, suddenly, I found myself the keeper of a troublesome secret, I being, beyond doubt, the only person in Jerusalem who knew how distinguished was the stranger within its gates. As I walked toward the house of Phineas, I wondered what I should do in this matter.

For a time I was minded to go to the Tower of Antonia and there deliver my secret. Yet Bardanes had saved me from the evil Teron and had been kind to me in that stronghold of his. I found in my heart a sense of gratitude to Bardanes. There was in me only bitterness for those proud, high-headed, violent men who had unjustly taken the life of my friend. Bardanes was right. They had devoured the substance of the poor. Every finger's length of their silks and linens, every stone in their palaces, every drop of their wine, represented a groan of misery. Was not Bardanes better than they?

I had a like feeling for the Roman officials who had unjustly seized my lover and deprived him of his liberty; who had shut me in prison and tortured me with thirst and hunger.

So it befell that I kept my secret and I was wise in doing it. I went to the house of Phineas, and a neighbor's wife who kept the key to its door admitted me.

I lay down upon a rug, wearied, as is one who has traveled far facing a strong wind. Then the thought came to me that I was not like Peter and Stephen and other followers of my Master, for my heart was full of bitterness. How was one to love evil men, I asked myself.

And while I was praying for light, alone in the deserted house of my friends, I fell asleep.

CHAPTER X

SAUL SEARCHES THE HEARTS OF THE FAITHFUL AND BARDANES TERRIFIES THEM

A LOUD rapping on the door awakened me. I opened it. Rain had been falling and the night had come. In front of the door stood the man of Tarsus, a lantern in his hand. I trembled with fear.

"Is it another accusation?" I asked.

He answered in a gentle voice: "My little one, be not afraid. I am like the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah bringing gold and incense to the beautiful city."

"What mean you by these words?" I asked.

He held up his lantern and looked at me and said impressively: "The oracles of God are in my heart. I would make you acquainted with them and their history. I come also for knowledge. Often I search for it in the darkness with this lantern in my hand. My fair maid, I would know what is in *your* heart."

I dug in the ashes of the fireplace and found live embers and kindled a flame and lighted the wick of a lamp. Saul, who wore the boots of a Roman soldier, removed them at the door, saying: "You may remember that Plato moved out of Athens because Diogenes was wont to soil his couches with muddy feet."

"I was born in Athens, but I have little knowledge of Plato or Diogenes," was my answer.

"They were truth seekers. They needed only Jewish

blood and Jewish faith and vision to lift them into greatness."

"And a house in Jerusalem, to insure their death by violence," I longed to say, thinking of Jewish hypocrisy and savagery, but dared not yet to speak my mind.

"I am almost alone among my people in my admiration for the Greeks," he went on. "I am fond of their art and literature. I owe much to it. But the lights of Hellas have flickered out."

I could hold my peace no longer and I loosed my tongue, albeit in a gentle tone.

"So have those of Judea," I answered, "and it is because you think yourselves perfect. You seek no more for truth, you who rule the people. You have found all the truth that is worth knowing, it would seem. Have you learned everything that is to be known of God who spread the tent of the heavens and made the seas and the rivers to know their place? I would think so, because when one comes forward with ideas not in the Torah you do put him to death."

The man covered his mouth with his hand and stared at me, astonished by these reckless words.

"You are the dreaded Saul," I went on. "I am astonished at my own courage in speaking thus to you. How may we hope that knowledge will come to us save it be through the restless seeking in our souls? And though one seek and find, yet dare he not tell of it, for fear of a cruel death. Is Israel perfect? Has it no sins to be rebuked? Does it not stumble at noonday, with waste, destruction, and bondage in its path? You rich men enjoy the favor of Rome. The yoke is made easy for *you*. But think of the great multitude of the Jewish people. Are they not

robbed by the Romans and by evil men who seize and slay and flee to the mountains? Are they not wretched with poverty? I have naught to say against the law of the Torah, but I would ask, does it give your people justice, or even mercy? Does it soften the heart of the oppressor?"

Saul walked up and down the room, his head bent in meditation. Presently he stopped and, looking down at me, said: "This from a girl—a Greek girl! My child, you grieve and offend me, but go on. I give you liberty to speak out. Tell me of this faith of yours in that Jesus of Nazareth. How came you by it?"

It was then that I felt the hand of my Master laid upon me as I had felt it that day beyond the gate of the Temple, and I told of His love and power—how they had healed Marsitas and Bartimæus and put a new heart in me and in many others; how He sought to bring all the children of men into one peaceful brotherhood, loving justice, charity and good will. Then gave I, word for word, certain of the great sayings that had come from His lips and which were known to all our people.

He arose from the rug on which he had been sitting and again walked thoughtfully up and down. He stopped and lifted the lamp and looked into my face and said:

"You are most comely, my little one, and you have a gift the like of which is rare even among men. Your strength is like that of one who turns the enemy at the gates. Know you not that perfect righteousness cometh only through the law?"

"That may be, but I see it not in your people,"

I answered. "Have I not seen your most pious men inflicting a cruel death upon a fellow human being for telling an unwelcome truth? Is it righteous to be cruel? Can you think that God approves it? Am I wrong when I say, O Saul of Tarsus! that you have come here because you heard a whisper in your heart that the law had gone too far? Did it not smite and surprise you to see how bravely Stephen died? Are there any of your faith who have died in that fashion?"

I was on dangerous ground, but I spoke humbly and gently in the way of one seeking knowledge. Fortunately I had not kindled his wrath and I think that some one of those arrows from my bow had penetrated his armor. For a moment he looked sternly at me. Was I to be dragged to prison and held for the stoners? Then he said:

"I think that you mean no blasphemy. Therefore I will answer your question. For ages the children of Abraham have been dying for their faith."

I answered: "But only in hot blood as one dies in battle. That is not courage, but a kind of possession. Have they ever died with a prayer on their lips for those who slew them, as did my Master and the blessed Stephen? You will learn, O favored man of power, that we can die, if we must die, deliberately and cheerfully and forgivingly with this new faith in us."

"What mighty spell hath seized upon you?" he asked. "These are strange words. I am a stern man, hewn out of the rocks of old Cilicia. I know not women. Those I have seen have been mostly vain and foolish. God hath made you comely and given

you the tongue of the learned, but I do not understand you."

"My face is as God made it, and I speak not vainly when I say that I think to-night He hath guided my tongue so that I could avoid giving offense."

He gently touched my hair, saying:

"You are like a sprig of hyssop growing out of an old wall."

He sat down near me and, leaning forward, looked into my face and said: "Now suppose some young Pharisee, well blessed with this world's goods and not ill to look upon, and disposed to make you happy, should grow fond of you and offer his hand in marriage and a palace in the Holy City and the favor of great people and three drachmæ a day for your purse and silks and fine linen with which to adorn your person, could you not then be content with the ancient faith of Israel?"

I read the meaning of all this in his eyes and answered:

"I would not listen to him because neither wealth nor power nor fear nor any other thing could tempt me to give up my faith in the mighty One. How could I, even if I would, give up that which is my life? It would be like giving up the bones in my body."

Calmly he arose and took his lantern from the shelf on which it rested. His face wore a look of sadness when he turned and asked:

"Why say you it is your life?"

"Because I am as one who has died and is born again."

"That is foolish talk," he said. "Are you not like me, of flesh and blood?"

"I dwell in the same body, but I have a new heart and a new spirit and they are of God, and they control my body so that it is like the lantern which holds your light—a thing not of much value. If it were broken, I would get another."

"Fair maid, I hope it may be as comely as that you have. Be careful with your lantern. When it breaks, what becomes of its light?"

"It only seems to go out. Its little flame rushes away, fulmenlike, and joins the flood from the sun that fills the world—a thing as abundant as the Holy Spirit. No part of it is ever destroyed. Darkness is only interrupted light, a shadow. Evil is the shadow caused by the interrupted spirit of God. I would say that my Master has given me wick and oil so that I may capture and hold His light. In the glow of this lantern I live a new life. The world is changed. Things that were once great are now little. I look afar up and down the ages and over cities and mountains and beyond the great barrier with this lantern. When it breaks, shall I not light my wick again in the Kingdom of Heaven?"

I knew not then that I was addressing a man whose intellect was to shake the heart of Rome with fear and break the world from its ancient moorings. He had come to draw me out and to sound the depths of my folly and to declare the measure. I think that when his plummet came up he found it soiled by the miry bottom of his own troubled sea. When I think of that evening I recall the words of my Master, "A little child shall lead them."

What a weapon is the truth! Yet I claim no more for myself than that I caused him to look into the new

road I traveled, from which the temptation he had offered could not call me. The calm faith and courage of Stephen and Rachel and Phineas and myself were phenomena which he strove vainly to understand. My advantage was this: he had conceived a liking for me. Having youth and beauty and a certain grace of spirit born in me and intensified by my experience, I was unlike any woman he had known. I satisfied a craving of his nature. Of this I write with reverence and with gratitude to God, for thus advantaged I could speak to this zealous Pharisee as could no other.

"There is something—something good in you," he said. "But you seem not to know that the law came of God to Moses and it ill becomes one to criticize the Most High."

"The spirit of the law is of God, but men have written some of their own spirit into its letter. How could they help it?"

This I said and the saying of it seemed to displease him. As if convinced that I was a hopeless pagan, he turned and left me.

Soon a woman came to the door for news of my friends. She said that many of the faith were going to the house of a neighbor that night to hear Joses tell of the risen Lord. He had seen and talked with Him. I went and sat in a crowded room and heard Joses—a man with a magnificent head and stature and a tongue like that of old Demosthenes—tell of seeing our risen Master and of feeling the touch of His hands and of hearing His beloved voice as it spoke of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It thrilled me to hear this great witness tell of that wonderful moment when He was taken up in the clouds of the heavens.

As soon as he had finished, Joses mounted a horse at the door for fear, it was whispered, of the fate of Stephen. I, being the only witness present, was asked to tell of the tragic death of our great brother, and that I did.

It is certain that a spy was among us that night, for early in the morning I and others were seized and hurried to prison. And about the middle of the day Rachel and Phineas and I were taken to that same court where we had had an impressive warning.

A Scribe arose and spoke to the magistrate of our persistent part in the spread of false, disquieting, and even revolutionary doctrines. I remember well his words: "There are many among these misguided people who say that their King has returned to this earth and that presently He is to rule the world. These foolish and insidious doctrines are spreading rapidly and undermining the peace of the city and cannot fail to disturb the tranquillity of the empire. I ask not that these prisoners be condemned to death, for I have not lost hope that they may be induced to turn from their folly. I ask, O heart of Cæsar! that they be turned over to a committee of the Holy Council for such discipline as in its judgment may be necessary."

I longed to answer him, but no woman, however pressed by false accusation, dared to lift her voice uninvited in a Roman court. So when the decree, "It is so ordered," came from the magistrate we submitted in silence and went back to prison.

Now when we were leaving together, Phineas whispered to me: "I would it had been death, for I think that we shall be put to torture." Tears came to his

eyes when he added: "I care not for myself, but only for her. Why should it come to us? We have harmed no man. We have no ill will in our hearts. We seek only the light and the chance to love and serve."

"It was so of our Master," I answered. "He will help us."

That day we were taken up the great hill in the south beyond the palace of the High Priest to a court, open to the sky, in the house of a wealthy Pharisee. I have since learned that it was that of Shimeon of Mesada. There was a large group of the great solemn-faced men of the city. They sat on rugs. They had been eating and were drinking wine. We were led before them and commanded to sit down. The Scribe who had appeared against us in court arose and said:

"O ye keepers of the holy temple and guardians of the law. Here are Phineas, the weaver, and his wife Rachel, and the young woman Doris, a Greek, who, in spite of the warning of the magistrate, persist in the spreading of false doctrine. It is for you to deal with them as you in your wisdom may think best. What is your pleasure?"

One of them answered: "Let Phineas arise and be questioned."

Phineas arose and the man said to him: "Until heresy entered your mind you were a good citizen devoted to your tasks and obedient to the law. A time has come when you must either give up your life or the blasphemous doctrines of the false prophet Jesus, lately put to death. Which do you choose?"

Stoutly Phineas answered: "I can give up my life, ye holy men of the Temple, and even with a prayer that those who take it may be forgiven. My life is

no great matter. But my new faith is, I am persuaded, a mighty thing. It is even greater than my will and I would not know how to surrender it. Therefore if I must choose, deliberately and calmly do I choose death for my portion."

It thrilled and heartened me to hear these words. I had been trembling, but now I was calm. There was a stir of astonishment among those rulers of the city. They whispered together. They had expected no such answer from the simple man who had made his living at the looms. It was then that I observed in their midst the wise and gentle-faced Gamaliel and, back among the columns, at the side of the court, stood Saul of Tarsus. His face was troubled.

In a moment Rachel was called upon to answer. She arose and said: "I can find no better words for my own feeling than those of my husband. Whither he goes I will follow."

And I being called upon arose and said: "O mighty men, until I saw and felt the power of my Master, Death was an enemy that made me tremble. Life is still dear to me but my God is dearer. The faith I have is the gate of eternal life. It is founded upon knowledge. Sooner could you change the gold of the Temple into brass, than that. Therefore must I go in the way of Phineas and Rachel."

Then said one of those who were sitting in judgment: "Let the prisoners be withdrawn while we confer on this matter."

A guard took us to a room off the court dimly lighted from above. There we knelt, side by side, and prayed to our Master. Soon a priest came to the door and summoned Phineas and Rachel. I bade

them good-by and saw them not again. The door closed and I was alone. I listened but could hear only a murmur of voices in the court. It ceased suddenly. Those voices were hushed in a silence like that of the grave. Then I heard a cry of terror from Rachel that cut me like a sharp knife. I wondered what had befallen her, for she had left me with a smile and a stout heart. A long time I was bowed like a bulrush praying to Him I expected soon to see in paradise. The priest opened the door and spoke my name. I arose and followed him into the court.

Now in an open space in the midst of those rulers of the city and some ten cubits apart from them stood the man Bardanes, the familiar stick in his hand. His basket and two coiled serpents lay on the ground beside him. His eyes were upon the latter. I knew then the test which Phineas and Rachel had suffered and what was prepared for me. As I neared the circle of death I spoke out in the tongue of the Ishmaelites of the great desert:

"No Name, of the tribe of Furoras and robber chief, who pretends to be a friend of the poor and who sells his friendship for a few pieces of silver, why have you shorn the hair from your hands?"

He turned and looked at me with an astonishment in his face which quickly changed to pale terror. His mouth opened wide and his lips trembled.

These men had declared their will, and it was law. I should have to die, but not by the hand of Bardanes. For a moment I had him in my power. One of the serpents began to crawl away and he caught it with his stick. I heard the voice of the ruler who had spoken before, saying:

"Doris, again I ask, do you choose to die or renounce your folly?"

I answered: "If my courage failed me now, my Father in heaven would disown me and my righteousness would be as a filthy rag."

I was interrupted by the voice of Saul. He came to my side from among the columns and said: "I protest, O rulers of the holy city! against this cruelty. It offends me and I think it even more offensive to the most high God than blasphemy or heresy. This is a woman of high intelligence. I ask that you question her and make sure, if we may, whence comes her courage and her obstinacy. Do you not remember what our great teacher, Gamaliel, hath said?"

Quickly I answered: "O wise men of Jerusalem! it were better for you to understand the stiffness of your own necks. First, I have a duty to perform. I see before me three serpents and one is in human form."

I was interrupted by a kind of pandemonium filled with a stir as swift as the flying of dust in a whirlwind. What a wild scattering and tumbling of human beings! What cries of alarm were in that scene before me! Bardanes had been the cause of it. Seizing the serpents by their tails, he had flung them, wriggling in the air, at the wise men who sat between him and the court entrance. They scrambled toward the walls, yelling with terror, while Bardanes ran through the space opened and out of the arched way. With feet swift as the weaver's shuttle he ran, leaping above the great Naja, coiling on his path. The panic continued long enough to give him the start he needed.

The famous Bardanes was neither captured nor

seen again in Jerusalem. Certain of the younger men present promptly set out in pursuit of him and slaves came with long sticks and slew the serpents, which had fled into a bed of flowers. None of those panic-stricken men had been harmed. Many gathered about me to learn what I knew of that "brother of serpents." I told them that he was Bardanes, the terror of rich men.

It was the man of Tarsus and another Pharisee who took me back to the prison whence I had come.

"I cannot understand you," he said. "Has death no terror for you? Have you no dread of it?"

"Yes, but not so much, I think, as have you wealthy Pharisees," I answered with a smile.

His face grew stern and he held his tongue until they had delivered me to a guard at the prison door. Then as he turned away he said:

"I go now to the magistrate."

I judge that he thought it easier to bend the will of Rome than that of his associates. What he may have done for me I know not. Officers came from the tower to take a deposition touching my knowledge of the famous bandit chief. I was needed as a witness against him. That may be the reason why the priests and other holy men of the Temple were not permitted to take my life. The whole truth of the matter I know not.

I was held in prison and well fed and lodged until the year was spent. I had achieved fame as "the woman who knew Bardanes" and many came to see me. The most welcome of these were Nehemiah and Miriam, with good news of my little son whom I longed to hold in my arms.

When the rulers despaired of capturing that terror of the mountains they gave me a flogging and sent me away with a bleeding back. The flogging, I have reason to believe, was a sop to the Pharisaic party.

My friends took me by night to the home of Nehemiah and Miriam beyond Jericho. What I suffered from my soreness in that journey I will not try to tell. Who that carried the lantern of the faith in the darkness of that time did not suffer worse trials?

But one thing I would not fail to tell. As we left the city it rang with the news of a happening which shook the hearts of the mighty and the tongues of the people. As Shimeon of Mesada was riding, late that day, beyond the city walls with a companion, as he had long been wont to do, four mounted bandits rushed from a thicket and seized and carried him away. One of them was said to be the dreaded Bardanes.

CHAPTER XI

THE PALACE OF HAZAR

TO see the growing of a child is like considering the lilies. What a change in the lad I had left ten months before. We scarcely knew each other, for I, too, had been growing, albeit toward littleness, for I was but a shadow of the mother he had known. It was the sound of my voice that awakened his memory. Then he ran to my arms.

There are days which stand out like great towers in the plain of the past. Such an one was that merry day with the little lad in the home of my good friends. My cares and fears and sorrows fell from my shoulders and in spite of my soreness I played as I had not played since the days of my childhood. I chose Julian to be the name of my boy, and took him to the Jordan, where James, a disciple who had come down from Jerusalem, baptized him in the manner of that John, the son of Zacharias, who had baptized our Master.

Teron was no longer to be feared. He was a bedridden invalid, a prisoner in his own palace. Physicians from Rome and Antioch had come to try to cure his ills. I confess that, hearing these tidings, I felt like Miriam of old after the drowning of Pharaoh. Bartimæus and his daughter were working in the vineyard of my friends.

I planned to set out soon for Cæsarea, where I

hoped to be able to see Apollos, having secured a letter to one of the rulers of that city who had given his heart to our cause. I fell ill and was near death for a time. My good friend Miriam was like a gentle mother to me. A letter from Apollos to Nehemiah strengthened my heart and hastened my recovery. I have kept it among my treasures and these are the words he wrote:

MY BELOVED NEHEMIAH: Through the help of powerful friends I hope soon to be free and out again under the great shining roof of the world. I am weary of these rock walls and the voice of the sea which is never silent. It is always lashing and battering the great mole of Herod, the King, and crying out against it. Herod was a conceited man. He was in error when he thought to build a wall, in the broad path of the west winds, which would be stronger than the sea. We of the new faith are like wind-driven waves in our untiring assault upon the barrier of ancient prejudice which would hold us back. The sea will prevail. It will have its rights because its waves, more in number than the legions of Rome, are undismayed by failure. The will of God is in them. A day is coming when not one stone of Herod's shall be left upon another. And we shall prevail because our waves, like those of the sea, driven by the winds of the west, will be irresistible. A day is coming when the new Light shall go to the ends of the earth as does the mighty deep. So my faith is in God and His west wind.

When I am free I shall come to your house because it has so often sheltered her, my beloved one. God grant that I may find her there. If not, I think that you will know where she may be found. If she should come, show her these words and tell her that I would have her wait for me and be patient. It will not be long before I shall be coming. My soul is free. It lives not here but in the happy days I spent with her in the great waste. Thus she helps me to bear my loneliness. And the memory of one day is like the coming of the east wind in the desert. It is that day when she stood before me with the child in her arms and my Pharisaic soul would not let me

take her to my breast. How I long to embrace her and ask her to forgive me for all the ills that came of my wicked stubbornness. As the rivers flow to the sea, my thoughts have flown to her since then. I long for the time when, side by side, we can take up our work and if we must die in doing it, I hope that we may go, hand in hand, to paradise. The longer I live the more clearly I see that love is the one great thing in this world. To love one person long and well is a wholesome exercise for the heart. I am persuaded that it is a preparation for the higher and nobler love.

Grace and peace be with you and Miriam and her.

APOLLOS.

This letter was to me like the sweet cane from a far country. Three times a day I read it and slept with it under my pillow.

Long I waited with these dear friends for the coming of my beloved one, working on the looms and in the vineyards, until the year was far spent. Indeed, love is the one great thing in the world. It survives all discouragement. It lends of its life to hope and would seem to be immortal. Near the year's end another letter came in his familiar script, but not Apollos. He had been set free, or partially free, on condition that he would leave the Jewish province. Tender words he wrote from Damascus where were a goodly number of our faith. He had begun to teach among them. He begged me to join him there and the fleeter the legs of the beast on which I rode the better.

Immediately I went to the city of Jericho to buy food and garments needed in my journey. While there I went with Miriam and Nehemiah and Bartimæus and his daughter to a meeting of our people in the garden of a certain rich man of our faith. Joses, who had been in Damascus and Antioch, had come down from

Jerusalem to speak to us. He thrilled me by telling of the great doings of Apollos in the ancient city on the watered plain of the north.

This magnificent man described the beautiful, fertile shores of the full-flowing Abana, their fruitful groves and gardens, and the noble towers and temples and monuments of the oldest city on earth. Its people were from all lands and a great hunger for the truth of God was upon them. This made it a fertile field for our sowing, our seed being for all the children of men. The spirit of our Master was on the tongue of Apollos. More than five thousand people there had accepted our faith. Before the meeting ended, Saul and his followers in Jerusalem broke in upon us, seizing many of our number.

And a great cry arose, as it had been a voice from Heaven. It was this: "Why do you persecute us, O Saul of Tarsus?"

Miriam, Nehemiah, and I, being near the outer edge of the crowd, escaped; but Joses and many others who stood near him were taken and forced into prison.

When we were leaving the city a man in the dress of a shepherd followed us and when we were gone well beyond the houses he came up behind me and asked in the Aramaic tongue:

"Are you that Doris of the new faith, a friend of Apollos of Gerasa?"

Turning, we saw that his face was hidden under a fold of his headdress. I had heard a familiar note in his voice.

"Yes," I answered.

"I bring you good tidings," he said. "Do you not see how beautiful are my feet?"

He held them up for our inspection one after the other. They were large and covered with dust.

"If it were possible for a foot to smile mine would be smiling. They are glad to see you," he went on.

His feet began dancing merrily.

"What are your tidings?" I asked.

"A letter. It is sealed, but the stars have told me what is in it. One of the greatest men in the Roman empire is your friend. There are only two greater—Cæsar and one whose name modesty compels me to withhold."

For a breath he stood proudly erect before me, his right hand upon his breast.

"I have never told the truth in my life but once, and this is the once," he declared, as he took a sealed wrapper from his pocket and put it in my hands. "Soon or late temptation overcomes a man. Leave here to-day, do as the writer of that message bids you do, and you will be happy."

I broke the seal and found written in good Greek on a sheet of vellum these words:

You are a friend of the teacher Apollos; so am I. You will soon be setting out for Damascus, whither a short time ago I gave him safe conduct from a point not far from Cæsarea. I urge you to be on your way, the roads being now safe. And at a point in your journey you will meet a stranger who will bring you to my house, where a friendly welcome awaits you and also news of your lover. If you need money, the man who brings this will give according to your need out of a full purse. Return this letter to him as soon as it is read. Although it is signed by no name, permit yourself to entertain no doubt that it comes from

A FRIEND.

It was a curious letter and no doubt of its sincerity entered my mind as I gave it back to the stranger and told him that I had money enough, Nehemiah having paid me generously for my labor.

"No need of money!" the stranger exclaimed, "I yield my place to you. Henceforward you stand next to Cæsar." He bowed more politely than a shepherd is wont to do and turned and left without saying another word. As he walked away I saw him uncover his face.

That evening I with my little son in my lap set out on one of the stoutest asses of Nehemiah for the village of the Great Rock, a few miles in the north on my way to Damascus. There and in other places farther northward, where I had been before, were friends who made me welcome. I tarried here and there, spreading the light.

Miriam had taught my little son to read and her teaching had filled his mind with a great curiosity. He was now able to talk with me and he pressed me with many queries as we went on our way. The look of him gladdened my eyes. He had my blonde, curling hair and the strong Roman face of his father. I remember well the day when his active, precocious intellect put me on the rack with a quest which I could not satisfy. "Had he a father like other children?" "Yes." "Where was he?" "In Rome."

His queries then were like a flight of locusts darkening the sky. Where was Rome? Was his father like Nehemiah? Who was he like? Was he a good man? Was he big? Had he a beard? And so it went on, one query leading to another, and each day suggest-

ing new ones. So persistently and naturally he touched this sore spot in my life.

In the first days of that journey I thought much of the mysterious letter and was always looking for the stranger who was to guide me to the home of my unknown friend. Nehemiah had said that it was probably written by that rich man of our faith in Cæsarea of whom we had heard and who, as like as not, was hiding under sentence of death. This view of the matter I soon adopted and as the days passed I thought of it very little.

It befell that one day as we journeyed on we saw a mounted cohort of Rome coming on white horses with plumed hats and with gleaming eagles on the staffs of the front rank. As these splendid warriors of Cæsar neared and were sweeping by us, I saw the father of my little son, riding at the head of the column in the uniform of a general. I perceived that he saw us, for as they passed he turned his head and looked at me and the boy while I waved my hand to him.

Now before we had reached the next milestone of the highway I heard clattering hoofs behind us and, turning, saw Vespasian approaching on a snow-white Arabian steed. He came down to me from the middle part of the road, and dismounted, exclaiming, as he kissed my cheek:

"My beloved Doris, you are still fair to look upon—as fair as yon flowery plain."

He seized the little lad Julian and lifted him even with his eyes and looked into his face, saying: "I swear by the great right arm of Jupiter, he looks like me in spite of his hair. He will be a soldier and a

hero. He will be like one of those mighty, blonde men of the north."

"I hope not," I said.

He put the boy on the back of the big, white stallion which had been standing by his elbow and exclaimed:

"How erect, how proud he is! Do you not see that he is a born soldier?"

"I believe not in war," I answered.

He looked at me and laughed, asking: "Are you one of those who would turn this world into a land of dreams? Tiberius Cæsar has given us a great saying. It is this: 'Peace is a good thing, but it is like water—unless you have a pail to hold it, peace will flow away—and the pail is power.'"

"I look forward to a time when men will love and trust each other," was my answer.

Again he laughed, saying: "You might as well go to the top of yon mountain and try to see the coasts of Britain. You little flower of old Hellas! You ought to know that men are nothing more or less than a pack of wolves. If you try to control them by loving them, you will soon have no meat on your bones."

"It is too true," I answered. "But we of the new faith think much of the great change that is coming. It is our task to show that power which changeth the face and heart of man."

He laughed again and very loudly, as if I had spoken a merry jest.

"Dream on, my pretty one, and good luck to you," he said. "I keep the talisman. It has put me on the road to fortune. I halted the cohort at the post

beyond for rest, while I came back to thank you and to see my boy. We bring Herod Agrippa, the new governor, to Jerusalem, and take Pilate back with us. Are you married?"

"No. Are you?"

"Yes, to a noble Roman lady and, upon my word, I believe that I am in love with her and the young ones. I was loath to leave them."

"I am glad, for it is an easy step from the love of one's family to the love of neighbors."

"My wife is like you," he said. "That is why I love her."

He took the boy from the back of the horse and embraced and kissed him. Then he turned to me and asked: "What is his name?"

"Julian," I answered.

"It is a name honored in the house of Cæsar. He is a sturdy, beautiful lad. I wish that I could have him." He looked thoughtfully at the boy and added: "But that is impossible."

He gave me a purse filled with scrip and silver and said:

"Take good care of him and when you need money I will send it. He will want to be a soldier. Then if I live I will help him and put him in the way to glory."

He kissed the lad and called him his boy, and bade us good-by, and mounted and galloped away.

Now through all this, Julian had looked with awe and wonder at this splendid figure with its shining boots and coat and scabbard and had said not a word. It is strange that he should have asked as soon as the young general had departed with four mounted members of his troop who came riding out to meet him:

"Is he my father?"

I had to tell him the truth. That day something out of his blood began to stir in his brain. The die was cast. Nothing could turn him from the wish to be a soldier. In the next village he saw a Greek lad wearing a toy sword and blowing a wooden trumpet. He gave me no peace until I had procured for him a like equipment. Then the pride of the boy was amusing and prophetic.

The money from Vespasian enabled me to buy new garments for both of us and the best food in the markets and to pay for comfortable shelter in the caravansaries.

When I entered the bazaars of a city and saw the beautiful silks of many colors, I was astonished at my vanity. It was my besetting sin. Too lavishly I spent my money there, thinking only of my desire to please the eye of Apollos which would soon be looking on me. I knew how a lady should be dressed. I bought no cheap, tawdry things as I had once done in Capernaum. They were rather the tokens of wealth and taste. When I journeyed on my heart was heavy with the feeling that I had displeased my Master. Yet did He not love beauty, I asked myself. His robe was always clean. Its whiteness seemed to shine. There was that in the look of Him which put me in mind of the splendor of Heaven. I recalled as I thought of it that His look came not from silk and gold, but of something in His face and form. Yet He loved comeliness. Did He not clothe the flowers of the fields? And should not we without the glory of God in our persons do our best to make them comely to look upon?

These were my arguments, yet I was not quite content with them.

No stranger had come to take me to the friend of Apollos.

Many soldiers were on the highways. Bardanes had been such a peril to the rich that the wealthy Jews had spurred the government to action. Of a surety the rich had to be protected. The roads were now safe.

There was a secret word we used among strangers in those days to indicate that we were well proved in the faith. It was the word "Maranatha," which meant to us, "The Lord will come." With it I found many of the faithful. Memorable days I spent with them. There were those among these friends who were looking daily for the second coming of our Master.

I journeyed to the great lake whose beauty could not soften the bitter memories which came to me as I saw it again. I went on through Magdala, inquiring as I passed for the beloved Mary and getting no news of her. The enthusiasm for the teaching of my Master there and in Capernaum, which had thrilled the heart of the multitude when He set out upon His Father's business, had been trodden down by the oppressive feet of the rich men of the old faith and their priests. I saw no sign of it left in my passing through. Some of it had gone away to safer parts; some of it, I doubt not, was living a hidden life in that city of the beautiful gardens.

I went up into the highlands, from the summits of which I could see the hills of Zebulun where the mighty threw down their shields to rust, and through the great

gorge with the snowy summit of Hermon always in sight. The first night in this far country I spent with the family of a shepherd in a fair and fertile vale. There they told me of the great palace of Hazar, the freehanded, who dwelt in the high hills, remote from the road, a bit farther on. His palace had been built into the side of a great rock hill between two ridges and was almost as high as the temple in Jerusalem and had many windows filled with white, red, and amethystine glass.

He knew the secret power hid in the stars of heaven and was a friend of Tiberius Cæsar. He was also a friend of the poor and the sick. To the poor he gave of his riches, but only to those who had the strength and the desire to work. These were employed in his groves and vineyards or in tending his flocks and herds.

No one who begged for a living was suffered even to approach his gates. His bounty was only for those who came accredited from his friends. All who lived on his great estate were trained in the use of the bow. The bowmen of Hazar were famous and a power for good in that region. There were more than three hundred in his band. They stood for the law save that of the zealous Jews.

Every one was free to worship the god he liked best or none at all. Bandits were never seen in that country. They dared not enter it. For the sick among his friends he had a great physician from Egypt who could cure most of the ills with which men are afflicted. His gardens and groves were very beautiful and cut by a stream of living water flowing into the Jordan.

In all this I was deeply interested, for the thought

grew in me that a man of the type of Hazar should be in the fold of my Master. They told me how to find his palace, beyond a certain milestone, and I resolved to leave the highway at that point and seek him out.

Now later in my journey, on a bright, warm day when I was crossing a deep, green valley with rock-strewn sides, near the appointed milestone, I came to that stream of living water, where I tarried to refresh the donkey and myself and Julian. Not a hundred cubits beyond I saw an Arab shepherd standing by the roadside. He approached and halted us, saying:

"You are she to whom near Jericho a message from my master was delivered. You have been slow in coming. Shall I take you to his palace?"

"Are you one of the men of Hazar?" I asked.

"I am, and may the gods give him long life," he answered.

"I have heard much of him, and I wish to go to his palace."

He led me over a low range of rock-strewn hills cut by a gorge through which the stream tumbled from a noisy cataract above. We came into a higher valley very fair to look upon, with many groves and vineyards and houses on its sloping sides, and, set in a far range of hills overlooking the valley, I saw the palace of Hazar, its windowed masonry domed in between two ridges of rock. Never had I seen such a display of glass glittering in the sunlight. The bent wall of the palace glowed like a garden of red, white, and blue flowers.

I said: "I imagine that the home of Cæsar would be like that."

"He is the friend of Cæsar, and of me," said the

guide as he smote upon his breast, as if thereby to indicate the breadth of the sympathies of his master.

We came to a wide gate of heavy timbers in a high, circular wall. It swung open as we drew near. I have heard many tell of the gardens of princes and I have longed to see them, but I am sure that none of which I had heard could be lovelier than the one I saw beyond the gate of Hazar with its flowers and pools and fountains and stately cypresses. Out of a thicket of the latter, just within the gate, came a man with covered face. He wore a burnoose that shone with golden embroidery. His feet were in sandals. He said to my guide:

"Please go away."

We were soon alone together and then he said to me:

"I am Hazar. A long time I have known you and the man you love. Much has happened which I shall try to make you to understand."

He uncovered his face and I saw before me the man Bardanes. Had I been trapped? He observed the fear and astonishment in my face, for he said:

"If you fear me, I will send you back to the highway and you may resume your journey. I wish to help and cheer and not to harm you. I have news for you from Apollos."

He gave me a letter from my lover, and I quickly broke its seal and read:

MY BELOVED ONE: This letter will be delivered to you by my friend Hazar, whom you will remember. He was the snake charmer, astrologer, and mighty bowman of the fierce band of Furoras. It was in the desert that he became my friend. There his influence with the chief made my life more tolerable than it could otherwise have been. He found me in

the prison at Cæsarea, whither he had come to look for a friend of his who had been captured and shut up there by a troop of Roman cavalry. To him I am indebted for my freedom. He took me to his palace in the hills, where I enjoyed comfort and good food and exercise in the gardens and began to regain my broken strength. He brought me to Damascus and left me here to return to his people, but not until I had tried in vain to convert him to our faith. May you have better luck with him. The strange story of his life, if he should choose to tell it to you, will remind you of the story of Ulysses. His character and his love of beauty which has expressed itself in the trees and flowery slopes of his little paradise will also interest you.

I have had great success here in my work. I long for your coming. You will find me at the house of Ananias, a rich man of our faith, known of all who dwell in this ancient city. He will give us a wedding. Then the sun, the moon, and the stars, and even my little lantern of faith, will shine brighter. We will go away to some quiet place where we may enjoy the sight of each other and the beauty of green hills and running waters for a time of rest. And as we see the flocks feeding I will wind the pipe and tell again the stories of the blind bard of old Hellas. Meanwhile my heart will be going down over the hills and through the valleys to meet my beloved, and may the mercy and peace of God be with her.

APOLLOS.

Having read the letter, I turned to the man before me and, summoning my courage, spoke out: "O Hazar, I know you better than you think, better even than Apollos, but I have no will to trouble you."

He laughed as he answered: "My little maid, do you think that you could make trouble for the friend of Cæsar? Be not afraid. Let me know what is in your mind."

"Does Apollos know that you are the dreaded Bar-danes?"

He smiled and asked: "How came you by that notion?"

"I set out one evening from Jericho to Jerusalem, disguised for fear of the man Teron who wished to get me in his power. He came in pursuit of me and you captured him and me and took us to your stronghold. I recognized your voice and your hairy hands and the bow on your shoulder, for I saw much of you in the land of Furoras."

He asked: "Think you I forget the daughter of heaven who lodged with us? Tell me, have you any sorrow for what happened to that blood-sucking hypocrite of Jericho?"

"None at all," I answered. "But when you came with shorn hands to the courtyard of Shimeon of Mesada and used your serpents to persecute the people of my faith, my soul was against you."

Quickly he answered: "My fair maid, I was under compulsion to frighten you. Shimeon of Mesada has paid for that, and dearly. The serpents were used not to slay your friends but only to frighten them when they were asked to give up their faith. I thought that they would yield but they did not. They were led away and of what befell them you know as much as I. I am no innocent, white lamb of this human flock, but that was the dirtiest piece of business I have had to do with since I was born. Shimeon had threatened to send me to the Tower. A traitor from my camp had suddenly run upon me in the city, and Pilate was in Egypt. Before the sun could hide his face I was sure to be known. The pious Jews would have had me in their power.

"I have met hungry lions in the desert with no friend

save the bow in my hand. I had little fear of them. But the hungry lion is but a bleating lamb compared with those pious men of Jerusalem. They would have made me know the taste of my own liver. I could not oppose them and be shut up in the Tower. I had to please them and watch my chance to get away. You saw me go. It was a hasty and fortunate departure. It saved your life as well as my own."

"Could Pilate have helped you?" I asked.

He laughed loudly and said:

"O loved and sheltered one! You are young and your soul is as white as washed linen. You know not the world in which you live. Small wonder is it! You walk only on its smooth shores. I have been out in the deep water. I admire the courage and the downright honesty of your people of the new faith. I would like to understand it. I swear to you that I shall taste the salt of tears unless you come to my palace and meet my wife and rest with us a while."

He blew a whistle and soon two men came running toward us. One took my donkey and the other my saddlebags and hurried away on one of many paths.

I had no fear of the man and so I and my little son walked with him through the gardens and up to the shining palace in the hills. A veiled woman in a splendid purple robe embroidered with gold met us at its gate. She drew aside her veil and I saw before me my old-time friend, Ila, the favorite wife of the bandit Furoras. She kissed both my cheeks and bade me welcome. She held my arm as we climbed a flight of marble steps to the palace doors. Arab girls in white robes, with silver fillets and girdles and tiny bells upon their ankles, opened the door and took me and my

little son to our apartment. There were soft, silk-covered couches and gorgeous rugs from Persia, and lamps and flower-filled vases of wrought brass from Damascus, and tables of carved wood from Aleppo, and the perfume of rose leaves, and walls adorned with panels of ivory jeweled with glowing amethysts. A sift of light from the beautiful, mosaic windows that bent above us filled the air with beams of many colors.

Our saddlebags were there. The maids brought water in an earthen tub and removed our garments and bathed and rubbed our bodies with perfumed ointment and dressed us in fresh raiment.

They retired, leaving us to rest a while and we fell asleep. A sweet-toned bell awoke me near the day's end. The maids came with trays of bread and meat and cheese and a vessel of wine. Again the bell sounded and Hazar and his wife came to sit at meat with us.

I can never forget the splendor of this woman arrayed in the fashion of the great ladies of Jerusalem, in sandals of jeweled network above which were little, silver ankle bells that rang faintly as she walked. A jeweled diadem was bound with threads of gold upon her forehead. On two of these, pearls were strung back to her hair above her ears and down across her cheeks, meeting a like thread beneath her chin. Her tunic of purple silk showed above her girdle that held her loose-fitting, purple, gold-embroidered robe at the waist. Her necklace of pearls hung in glowing rows and fastened here and there upon it were little golden suns and moons. Bracelets of close-fitting, interwoven threads of very yellow gold ascended from her wrists to her elbow. On her left arm just above her wrist was one of ivory. The margin of her lids and brows

was dyed with a dark pigment. Her eyes had on them a shadow of queenly dignity. She was richly perfumed with the odor of rose leaves.

Now I was vain enough, those days, to enjoy the look of her, and for a moment I had a feeling akin to envy.

As we ate they asked me to tell them of the mighty Prophet who had put such faith and courage in His followers. This I did, while they listened with a great curiosity. Much I told them of the mysteries of the spirit and of the mighty doings I had witnessed. They tried to comprehend it but could not. It is very true that the wind bloweth where it listeth.

Said my host: "I would give much if I could only feel and know the thing which gives you a title to eternal happiness. That is a great possession—better even than the empire of Rome."

"It would be necessary for you to give all that you have and yet it might not be enough," I answered.

"It would be cheap at any price; but the truth is I have partners to consider," he said gravely.

As Saul had said to me, there was something good in him—I felt it—but he seemed to be tied hand and foot.

We tarried many days in the splendid palace and not until we were about to leave it and go on our way did I begin to know the soul of Hazar and the snare in which it was caught. I had won his confidence. He knew that he could trust me and he spoke freely. He told me the strange story of the years which had fallen since I knew him in the desert.

"I have always loved beasts and distrusted men," he began. "You may know the heart of a beast but not the heart of a man. Friendship was a thing unknown

to me until I knew Apollos. He was as honest as my favorite camel. The day after you and he had fled from King Furoras I found the sum that he owed me in my tent, and gentle words from him. In my life friendship has been a pretension clearing the way for robbery and slaughter.

"When we knew that our desert king was dead the chiefs chose me for his place and I took Ila for my wife. Then came a mighty chief from the great waste in the south to make war upon me. I went out to treat with him and sold him my crown and all my interest in the beasts and lands and slaves of Furoras and fled to Egypt with Ila and two of my men and a good store of gold. My wife and I took ship from Alexandria to Rome.

"Now, my father had taught me to read the mysteries of the sky. My pretty maid, if you will show me the palm of your left hand and tell me truly the time of your birth, I will be able to say what the future has in store for you."

"I prefer to leave that for my God to show me," I answered.

And Hazar went on with his story, saying: "I need not the stars to tell me that you are wiser than most women. It is best that the future should lie unseen."

"In Rome I hired the house of a dead patrician. It was a splendid house and around it were the nobles and the people of great wealth. I began reading mysteries for these favored ones and became the richest and most famous of all the many astrologers in the great city. One day came Caius, a wild youth of the house of Cæsar. What a lion's whelp was he! Face as red as if he had dipped it in a wine vat, small head,

outstanding ears, staring eyes, rather close together, with a little nose running down between them! His hands trembled like those of an old man."

"I have seen him," I said.

Hazar turned upon me with a look of astonishment.

"You, then, are the beautiful Greek girl whom I saw in my crystal globe."

He sat for a brief time in silence with closed eyes and then resumed his narrative. "I remember, now, he was to meet you near a great sea and fall in love with you and plan to take you to Rome. And this I dared not to tell him although it came to me in the things I saw. His death will be the result of that meeting. I was a careful astrologer. I told him only the pleasant things. And one was this: he would be the next Emperor of Rome. Before the ides of the month I was summoned to the palace of Tiberius Cæsar at Capræ.

"Now, this I would have you know. I have a passion for wealth—not for its own sake, but for the power and comfort and beauty it can provide. I am not too particular by what way I come by it. The poor are the pasture of the rich and the rich are my pasture. I can be cruel and as hard as rocks. But I have had a mother loved by all of the gods, and two good wives, and a daughter by one of them, as fair as you. Long ago I swore by all the powers in heaven that I would never slay a woman or mistreat her."

"I believe that," I said, remembering my stay in his mountain stronghold.

"It is only because I owe them more than I can ever pay," he went on. "A thousand times they have befriended me."

"They have an instinct which tells whom they may trust," I interrupted. "It is not only the gratitude of your soul. It is also the new Light lately come into the world."

"It may be so," he said thoughtfully. "But I would say that my goodness is not a thing to boast of. Know this, however, I feel like a white lamb when I think of Tiberius Cæsar. He was like an old ram with a washed fleece. He kept me there many days and the mysteries were edited and colored to his taste. I have said that he was like an old ram, but I assure you if the ram were present I would apologize. He bathed his mistresses in wine and drank of it before he went to bed with them. I was told that in a year the victims of his lust were as many as the ewes in his pasture. Their cries at night made me cover my ears. The stench of his rotted soul filled the island. My pretty maid, I have met an emperor and a prince and two kings and a governor and certain rich Romans. There is no beast or thing I know to which they can be likened. Even the dung that is cast away has some good in it. They have none. They are maggots in the decaying carcase of the patrician world."

He smote the rug beneath him with his clenched fist, a look of anger in his eyes that appalled me. Then he continued:

"Theirs, they say, is the way of nature. Therefore it is approved by nature's God. Now there is something wrong with all that, for when a man becomes a swine or a wolf or a dog or a leopard, he has an imagination, a cunning, a courage, a depth of resource to help him which the beasts have not. So can he be grosser than swine, a dog so hairy, long, and malodorous, a

leopard so prodigious, artful, and destructive, that he has become a new kind of beast never found in the way of nature. He is a demon of his own creation, an outlaw among gods and men. I have traveled much, my fair maid, and I tell you that the world has come to a time when the only clean people are those who work for a living. There may be others, but I have not seen them."

"My Master loved the toilers," I said. "Of them He was born and with them He toiled. Their souls were the field ready for His sowing. Among them He found His helpers. He knew that the idle hand and brain is the great maker of mischief. Therefore He advised the rich to be rid of ill-gotten wealth and to find a work to do."

Then Hazar asked: "What think you He would say to me?"

I thought carefully a little time and answered: "Much in your spirit He would approve. He would like your generous hand but not the tainted wealth in it. He would allow a palace and many lands if they were wisely and generously used; but, my friend, they must be honestly come by and maintained. In spite of your charity, I think that He would tell you to wash your hands of all you have save that and the wife you love. Though your gold were as the stones of the brooks, what doth it profit you if it be wrought into chains of bondage?"

I wonder at my courage as I think of that hour, and yet when I feel in me the new spirit, I do not falter. I think that it was rapping at the door of Hazar's heart, for he lifted his hands and shoulders in a despairing gesture as he said:

"I cannot change my way. My enemies are too many and too powerful and still more would I fear my friends. I must go forward and take what comes."

"Then shall your ship be broken in the heart of the seas," I answered.

He did not tell me more. I had no right to ask. Nor had I any need of doing so, for the truth had come to me. Tiberius Cæsar hated the rich and pious Jews and was wont to call them misers. Bardanes had a license to rob them and old Tiberius and his governor in Judea had been getting their share of the proceeds and protecting the famous bandit in his work of bleeding the Jews. It was a novel, insidious tax. Therein lay the reason why the Roman soldiers had never captured him. That was the cause of his fear of those wealthy Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees when Pilate was in Egypt.

Bardanes' hatred of the Romans, signalized by the painted insults on the backs of certain captured soldiers, had been only a pretense. Of all this I had no doubt when I learned later that Hazar's palace had been built years before for the accommodation of Tiberius Cæsar when he should visit Palestine for his health according to a plan he once had.

When my visit ended Hazar proposed to send a guard of bowmen with me to Damascus. This offer I refused to accept, the great highway being safe and, moreover, much traveled at that time of the year by merchant caravans going south to the sea and returning. He gave me a beautiful, white steed from the desert with a proud head and long plumes, his bridle decorated with small half-moons of silver. He helped me to his back and put my little soldier lad in front of

me and bade him cling to the mane. He stroked the curving, silken neck of the beast, saying:

"His name is Westwind, and may you have as many happy days as there are hairs in his skin. He is my wedding gift to you and Apollos. Keep his coat shining and he will shorten your journeys."

"And may he often bring us and the peace of God to your door," I answered.

At the lower gate in the valley, whither my host and his wife had come with me, I said: "I have a friend, stronger than all your bowmen, who, I think, is with me in my travels."

And Hazar asked: "Who is he?"

"The risen Lord," I answered. "Often I seem to feel His presence and protection and I have no fear."

"He? He has gone to the other world."

"But His spirit is like the light of the sun. It is in the heavens and upon the earth. My soul can see and feel it."

Hazar stood looking down into my eyes, with folded arms, a sad look upon his countenance.

"This is strange talk," he said. "Yet have I not the heart to laugh at you. Now that I see you going and hear your voice perhaps for the last time, I could hide my face and weep like a woman. I wonder that I should be so foolish, for it is no longing of the flesh. A pretty thing to see is your beauty, but I care not for it."

"All this is the longing of your soul to be free," I answered.

He said: "You and Apollos are a new kind of

people. I think that you must hate and despise us who are still stuck in the mire of this world."

"We hate and despise no man," I said. "We would help you if we could, for all men are our brothers."

They walked with me to the highway and I left them with the boy in my lap. Far along I turned and looked back and saw them standing in the middle part of the road as if loath to lose the sight of me, and Hazar waved his uplifted hand.

He was a pathetic figure and something more than a friend. With that pleading, uplifted hand, he stands fixed in my memory, as the Gentile world of my youth chained in the cold shadow of an evil past and looking out at the light and longing to feel its warmth.

CHAPTER XII

THE STORY OF THE REBIRTH OF A GREAT SOUL

I CROSSED the Jordan at the Bridge of Jacob's Daughters and journeyed on to the old city of Naffakh. Near it I was overtaken by a man and his wife of our faith. I spent the night with them, and then many days telling my stories to a multitude of their friends. A great number were brought to a knowledge of the truth.

I journeyed on, resolved to tarry no more, being eager to put the long miles, between me and my lover, behind the tail of my horse. The next night I lodged with a friendly shepherd and his family who were living in a tent on the plain of Hauran near the great Way to the sea leading up to Damascus. Caravans and shepherds and farm folk were passing us on the road, and one evening I came to the village of Shiha and spent the night at a caravansary and saw many people bound for the desert on their way to Egypt and among them were a few of our faith whose mouths were filled with the sayings of Apollos. They had much to tell of his noble countenance and voice and of the mighty power of his words. I was thinking of him when Julian and I lay down to rest with many others and heard a voice in my dreams which said again and again:

"Maranatha, Maranatha."

I thought not much of this, my ears being so familiar

with the word, for as I have written it was a greeting of our people. Therefore my dream did not astonish me, or even enlarge my expectations.

I had not gone a furlong from the village when Saul and a number of his strong-armed followers, armed with swords and spears, overtook me. There were cords and small chains and scourges bound and looped upon their saddles.

"So it is you," he said.

"And you," I answered. "Whither go you?"

"To Damascus, to cleanse the sacred places."

"Many of my friends have gone there for the same purpose and now I go," was my answer.

And this he flung at me with a stern look: "I shall cleanse with the sword and with chains and cords and scourges and the authority of the High Priest."

"And we with love and charity and good will and the authority of my Master."

The gentleness with which I spoke turned his anger. He looked into my eyes, as I smiled upon him, and said:

"You are the one of all others that I hoped never to see again."

"Did you so dislike me?" I asked.

"No, God forgive me. It was you that weakened my arm when its strength was most needed."

"God give me the power to weaken it again."

"O daughter of Hellas with eyes like those of the hind! Not again shall I yield to your enchantments. You heretics and blasphemers of the most high God shall know that my hands are eager to avenge Him."

"May He make your heart tremble for the words you speak," I answered.

He waxed wroth and said: "It is the flood of iniquity that makes me tremble. I thirst for the blood of the wicked. Not three days since I helped in the slaying of a hundred evil men, and one of them was the great robber Bardanes. I saw the right hands of the soldiers grow weary of slaying so that their swords fell."

"I have heard much of the famous bandit," I said. "How and where did you come upon him?"

"In Jerusalem we began to suspect that Pilate was shielding him. A new governor came to Judea and Pilate left. Bardanes was quickly found. He was living under the name of Hazar, in an old palace built for Tiberius Cæsar among the hills of Lebanon. We came up the highway with half a legion of mounted Romans. We captured his palace in a night attack and slew him and many of his retainers."

I was put to it to conceal my sorrow for the man Bardanes, now my friend, whose soul was more fit for paradise, I thought, than that of any of the pious men who had thirsted for his blood. At last treachery had done its work. Rome had played that little game with him a while and accepted its share of the earnings and then had calmly kicked the table over and seized everything in sight, including the life of its partner. No doubt Bardanes felt the need of rest from his labors and had ceased to be a paying partner.

My reverie was interrupted by Saul, who said: "Bardanes was an evil man; but more to be hated are these robbers of my God: Peter, Apollos, Joses, Philip, and their like. I shall not rest until they are destroyed."

"Then should I also be slain, for the same light is in me," I answered. "They honor the same God that you

do, but with love and charity and human kindness. You would honor Him with hatred and cruelty. Your law is my law, but does it not need the new Light to make it sufficient? With all this hateful threatening and slaughter, are you not always stung with a sense of guilt? Is not God's displeasure now whispering in your ear? Do you think that He, whose rebuke can stop the rivers and dry up the sea, has need of your help in avenging Himself? The help He needs is in spreading His love in this selfish, bloodthirsty generation."

He turned upon me impatiently, saying: "I spare your life, but I will talk no more with you."

He lashed his horse and called to his men and the whole troop of them galloped on ahead of me and were soon out of sight.

I journeyed on with the conviction strong in me that he had been pricked by my sayings. I was thinking much as I rode of Apollos. Many passed me coming down from Damascus. I was moved to stop them and to ask: "Have you seen him my soul loveth?" but held my peace.

When the sun was low I saw the man Saul and his companions a little way beyond me, standing at the edge of a thicket by the highway. He came out to speak with me as I neared them. Had they now decided to take my life? If so, they would be pricked deeper by my dying than by my words. So, bravely, I rode up to him. His countenance had changed. Suddenly my fear passed like the dew and the morning cloud.

"Child of error," he said, "your face is set as eagerly for its goal as that of the east wind."

"It is because I seek those I love," was my answer.

He went on: "You are as fair as a garden by flowing waters. My eyes have looked and failed, with longing for the love of a good woman. In spite of your folly I could love you, and I would that you were glad to see me."

And this was my answer: "In spite of my fear of you, I am glad, for although you are my enemy still are you one of those I love."

"I would that I were the only man you love, and not because of your beauty."

"Why say you that?" was my query.

"Because if you could be content with the God of my fathers and with me, I think that I should know the beginning of peace, for there is something great in you."

Carefully I chose out my words: "O zealous and well-meaning man of God, learned in the law and honored by great men! I take not lightly these words you speak to me. As long as my life lasts I shall remember them. I am bespoke and cannot be your wife nor can you get from me the love of God and man and the grace to keep it through all temptation, which is my great treasure. That cometh only through faith in my Master."

"A sorcerer! A pretender doing wonders by the power of Beelzebub, rejected even by his own family!" he cried out. "There is nothing new in his sayings. They are all in the writings of our great teacher Hillel."

I asked: "Did you see Jesus of Nazareth? Did you look into His face and feel His presence and hear His words?"

"I had neither the time nor the inclination to mingle

with the ill-smelling crowd that surrounded Him and listen to His arrogant blasphemies."

These words came to my lips: "Your opinion is born of ignorance, mine of knowledge. I have looked into His face. I have felt the power of His word and hand. Sincerity is like gold. When you see and feel and test it you know whereof you speak. If His sayings were in the writings of Hillel, they were dead. He raised them from their grave and put life in them and set them traveling through the world. Not all the legions of Rome can stop them. Moreover, He has risen from the grave and been seen of many."

"It is a lie. Have you seen him?"

"No, albeit I think that every hour He is with me."

"You are all mad with your enthusiasm and you are undermining the faith of Israel. It must be stopped. Come, the day goeth away, and we must find lodging for the night."

They mounted and I rode on with them at the side of Saul, in silence to the house of a husbandman near the highway. There we found a hearty welcome. Our bread and meat being eaten, I looked to the comfort of my horse and put my son to bed and sat down on my rug near the doorstep under the stars.

I was worried with thinking of the peril of Apollos from these zealous Pharisees with orders from the High Priest. Soon Saul came out of the door and sat down at my side. He spoke to me for the first time in Greek, saying:

"Our host's talk is of the stock of bulls. I have had enough of it."

"He is a hospitable man, but the stars are better company," I said.

"I have been thinking much of you," he went on, "and a passage from the bard of old Hellas comes to me. It describes the fall of a haughty Trojan before the blade of Menelaus:

"As when an olive tree with wide-spreading boughs beautiful with new leaves and white blossoms waving in the breeze—reared by a husbandman in some well-watered place—is hit by a mighty gust that tears it from its bed and lays it prone, so lay Euphorbus, skilled to wield the spear.

"Those are words that have in them the glow and odor of the springtime. You, my dear, are like a green olive tree in some garden, beautiful with new leaves and white blossoms stirring in the breeze; so fair to look upon that the whirlwind of my anger turns aside to spare you."

I answered: "These words are sweet as the singing of a bird but they fill me with a sadness like that which comes of the sound of the winter wind in the chimney when one is spinning by the fireside. If you see beauty in me, spare me not for its sake, I beg of you, but only because I would put no pain in your heart—because I requite your anger with gentleness and good will. If I have beauty, it is for one I love above all other men."

He sat in silence for a little time looking up into the shining heavens where a horned moon hung, dipping downward, with edges clear as those of a shallow, silver bowl. I wondered what was brewing in his silence until he asked:

"Who is this fortunate man?"

I dared not to tell him, knowing, as I did, the fierce temper of the proud Pharisee.

"I will not speak his name to you," I answered.

Again he brooded silently, stirring the grass with the end of his staff. Soon he said, with a note of sadness in his tone:

"I am become an empty vine. My roots are drying. I am a garden that hath no water. I am like the husbandman who carries more seed to the field than he takes out of it. I have yielded to temptation. I have turned from the battle and been as a broken weapon in the hand of my God."

He arose and left me suddenly. The lamps were out. The house door was open. I went within and lay down in the corner assigned to me and my little son. The husbandman and his children were already asleep. Saul had followed his companions to a field near the stable where, with the farm help, they slept upon broken sheaves of straw. I feared the morrow, knowing not whither the mighty tumult in the spirit of Saul would lead him.

A long time I lay hearing the nightingales in a near grove of olives. The fancy came to me that they were discussing my affairs and that their view of them was more cheerful than my own. With this sprinkle of song in my thoughts I fell asleep and dreamed of that night in the desert when my beloved had embraced and kissed me.

At daylight I was awakened by the voices of the husbandman and his wife. They were kindling the fire. I arose and went with Julian to the well, where we bathed our hands and faces. Saul's companions came out with the horses to give them water. The house now rang with the crying and shouting of children.

Saul came when we sat down around the great steaming family pot just off the fire. We sopped our bread

and ate together. Saul's face was clouded. For a time he spake not to me or to any other. He ate hurriedly and arose with thanks to our host and gave small coins to the children. We mounted and set out upon the highway. Saul rode beside me. As I looked upon the great dewy plain glowing in the sunlight, I said to him:

"It would seem that the flowers and grasses have caught the splendor of the night and are trying to hold it."

"You speak like one of the old bards of Hellas," he answered. "Your brain and voice and countenance and your form, like that of the willows of Arno, have a kind of magic in them. They have made me forget that yours is the blood and faith of the heathen. In so doing I have offended the most high God whom I seek to honor and avenge. In His name I beg of you, hearken to the pleading of my lips. Give up the false prophet and bow to the law and swear allegiance to the ancient God of Israel or be simply a frank and honest pagan."

"O man of power! I do greatly fear you," I answered. "I would avoid, if possible, the lightning of your wrath, for the Temple and the High Priest and the legions of Rome are behind you. But even if you slay me, I must tell you that I can neither give up my Master nor be a pagan."

"Your neck is like a rod of iron," he groaned.

"My faith is a city with impregnable walls," I answered.

Again he was angry, and thus he spake:

"Then shall you be herded with blasphemers and go back with us in cords and chains to Jerusalem to be

tried by the Great Council and death shall be your portion."

My blood grew warm and I spoke out: "Death! You know full well how I and others of my faith have smiled in the shadow of that ancient threat which ever, until now, has caused the heart of man to tremble. My friend, we have that in us which conquers the fear of torture or of death. If you have nothing more terrible than such little things to propose, there will be so much torturing and killing to be done that you will have no time for other work. It is a busy life ahead of you and your friends."

He turned and looked at me in amazement and I added: "I know now why my Master suffered Himself to be slain. He had taught us how to live; He had also to teach us how to die."

He checked his horse and fell back among his comrades as if he thought that hearing my speech would pollute him. We traveled a long time in silence and about midday ascended a hill from the brow of which we could see the white towers of the city gleaming in the sunlight. Beyond, at the edge of the plain, was a fountain. Thence we proceeded to refresh ourselves and our beasts. I observed that the countenance of Saul was strangely troubled. There before him, at last, was the city where he must resume his work of binding and scourging and dragging into the shadow of death.

Suddenly I was seized by two of his companions. They stripped off my outer garments. My little son began to cry out and to smite them with the toy sword which had hung from his belt. A man dragged him away. My tunic was put down to my waist. My feet

were bound together, my hands lashed to my sides. Again I was to be beaten with the scourge. They lowered me to the ground face downward and bound me so closely that I could not move with cords drawn tightly over my hips and shoulders between driven pegs. I lay there waiting for the lash to fall upon me and hearing the cries of my little son. Suddenly a silence fell. I wondered if they had slain him. Then came a little space of time not like any other this world has known. I prayed to my Master. Forthwith I heard His voice as clearly as ever I had heard it, saying in the Aramaic tongue:

"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

It seemed to come out of the air above our heads. It was the beloved, divine voice, unlike any other.

I should have thought that my ears had been in some way deceived had I not heard the query of Saul, trembling with fear as it asked:

"Who art thou that speakest, Lord?"

Now I heard not the answer. I was sobbing aloud, being overwhelmed by that unexpected coming. I think that the answer was not for my ears, but there was an answer as all the faithful know. I had been suffered to hear enough to assure me that the risen Lord was indeed there on the green slope beneath the hill.

I could hear excited talk among the men. Quickly they came and removed the cords that bound me. I turned and saw my little son helping them and weeping as he worked.

When, being free, I was putting on my garments he waved his toy sword and shouted to the men: "I am a Roman general, and will have you punished."

Saul was on his knees, his face covered with his

hands. As I drew near the man, I observed that he was deeply moved.

I thought of the words that I had heard from the lips of Peter: "The Lord turned and looked upon me and I went out and wept bitterly."

Presently Saul began to pray in broken tones. That prayer I do not venture to repeat. The memory I hold of it causes me to bow my head as I write, knowing well that God was standing near him. It was addressed to the Christ whose voice he had heard, whose countenance he had seen. The moment of understanding had come with that faith which can endure all things. He confessed that he had been as one who pours from a filthy pitcher.

I stood beside him and bowed my head as he spoke. The prayer had thrilled me, for although we saw Him not, I knew that my Master was there hearing every word that came out of the trembling lips at my side. I knew, too, that He had done there a miracle greater than the healing of Marsitas and Bartimæus. He had raised a soul from death unto life, even as He had raised the body of Lazarus.

In those moments I place the shifting of the tide of human thought. The first great barrier of the truth was broken down.

All the world knows of this miracle of the rebirth of Saul, because of the crown that was put upon his head and the heavenly gift that came with it. But now I bear witness that I have seen a thousand like miracles when I was quite as sure of the presence of my Master, albeit the beloved voice has not been heard again this side the grave.

"Will He never come?" I hear men say. But I

say that He has come again and again and is ever coming.

Saul could not see to mount his horse. His eyes were closed. He said that he could not bear to open them because of the great light which seemed to be shining around him. His eyes had seen the glory of God. Always I have thought that he was clinging to his vision and would not have it sullied by the sight of base and common things.

"I will walk into Damascus," he said. "And I wish the Greek girl Doris to lead me by the hand."

This I did while one of the men of his troop carried the boy Julian. Saul walked in silence at my side. I a humble, reborn, heathen woman was leading him to his great task. So we came into the city and I left him at the door of the house of one Judas, a friend of his, living in the street called Straight, and went in quest of my beloved Apollos with great news in my heart.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LIGHT OF THE GREAT LANTERN

WITH the aid of the secret word, I was not long in finding certain good people of my faith. Apollos, they said, dwelt with one Ananias, a rich man. I went to the home of a Jewish woman, converted by the teaching of my lover, who made me welcome. There I put on my best garments and left my little son at play with her children and straightway directed my steps to the gate of Ananias.

It was a beautiful house that sat in a great garden of flowers watered by streaming fountains. A slave took me into the presence of his master, a bearded man of middle age, plainly dressed. He smiled and his dark eyes had a kindly look in them.

"Maranatha," was my greeting.

"And may it be soon, my pretty maiden," he answered, and then asked: "Are you the beloved Doris?"

"O great man favored of God! my name is Doris and I seek Apollos, whom my soul loveth."

"My blessed one, he has gone to Antioch and would have you wait here until he returns. Where is your little son?"

"He is with people of our faith," I answered and my tears began to flow.

"Love has been for me a hard master," I said as I sank upon the floor shaken with grief, my patience with

disappointment having run out. I was like a broken reed and I added: "For years I have sought him and he has sought me and the miles between us are always many."

He came and put his hand upon my head very gently, saying: "O impatient one! Be of good cheer and content with the way the Lord appoints for you and him. Is not His work more important than your little wishes?"

Never have I forgotten that rebuke to my selfishness. Rising, I said: "May God give me grace to complain no more."

He sent me in a litter to bring my son and my clothing to his house. A servant went to the great caravan-sary for my horse. Julian and I had a small apartment to ourselves and a slave to wait on us.

Worn out by much travel and the perils and excitements of the highway, I did not leave my room for three days. Food and wine and a roll of the sacred writings were brought to me. Julian played with the children of a neighbor among the olive trees. On the morning of the fourth day, which was the Sabbath, I found my host sitting in the garden.

"May God lengthen your days," he said to me.

"And yours," I answered, "and may He protect you and your house where strength and peace have come to me."

"He hath made my heart to sing."

"Every day my heart is singing, and often the song comes up to my lips," I said.

"So it is with me, but now I sing of great tidings."

"And what are they?"

"I was called to the house of Judas in the Street

called Straight to meet that Saul of Tarsus of whose evil doings in Jerusalem I have heard by the lips of many. And he told me of the mighty thing which had been done on the road near Damascus. His words stirred my soul. Well were they chosen and he spoke them as only one may speak who hath seen the splendor of God. It came to me that he was appointed by the Lord to shew His spirit and to suffer for its sake.

"I laid my hands upon him and he opened his eyes and the blindness with which for three days he had been afflicted passed away. He ate meat and was refreshed and this day he will be telling in the synagogue of being born again through the power of the risen Lord."

My host sent a litter to the house of Judas to bring Saul. We went with him to hear his words, I riding by his side, and he said to me in Greek:

"O favored daughter of the home of art! Not again shall your courage astonish me. Now a time is come when I fear not peril, but safety. I am still in the shadow of the great mystery of a second birth. And being born to a new life I put away the things of old. Hereafter I would have you call me Paul, that being the name I was known by in Athens."

As we halted by the door of the house of worship, he said to me: "Now I gird on my armor and begin the good fight."

It had been noised abroad by criers in the streets that the learned Saul of Tarsus, one of the rulers of Jerusalem, would speak in the synagogue. Those of the old and the new faith came in great numbers.

As I have written, Saul had not been a comely man to look upon. His face, often clouded with anger, had

even in his mildest moments a look of bitterness and discontent. The hardness of his stony heart had filled his eyes and stained his face and covered his brow with furrows. Now what a change in the man! How beautiful was that newborn soul of his! He arose and stretched forth his hand and began to speak. I thought of the butterfly released from its weblike shell. His words went out on wings of diction, graceful and richly colored like those of my Master. Their mighty rhythm I try feebly to reproduce, sickened with a sense of failure. As I listened the thought came to me that only one who had heard the voice, and seen the countenance not like any other, could have spoken them. His look, his words, were those of a new man. I saw not his stooped shoulders and sallow skin, for the man was clothed in a kind of beauty. I and all the people were amazed.

He spoke to the words of Isaiah: "I was not lifted up when evil found mine enemies."

He said that he had discovered the path which even the vulture's eye hath not seen. It was the path of love that leadeth unto the deep things of God—the love that endureth much and is patient, the love that forgiveth even the enemy, who lieth in wait like the leopard.

"Save this love be in men, there is none righteous," he said. "The poison of asps is under their lips. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. Not by the law, not by our own righteousness, but by the righteousness of God, living in our hearts, shall we be justified."

Then was there an outcry among certain of the

Pharisees. He turned to them and smiled and again he stretched forth his hand. What magic was in that face and hand! Always some astonishing thunderbolt of Heaven followed the stretching forth of the hand of Paul. It was like the fabled hand of Jove. A silence fell and he said:

"O ye men of the law! I know you, how you give hate for love! Not five days back I was one of you, hurling out bitter words when I heard the voice of Truth. My eyes were darkened. The spirit of slumber was upon me. I ran about with men and horses and swords and scourges and cords, treading down the people, dragging them into prison and the peril of death. I saw not in the law the shadow of the better things to come which were to be its fulfillment. I longed for peace and when it came it was that of the spider in his slender web. I went up and down the land searching for blasphemy, and lo! suddenly I found it in my own house."

Then he proved by the law and the prophets that Jesus was the Christ of God.

Again the outcry of protest and again the power of his spirit silenced them and he went on:

"Not four days have passed since I saw Him, the crucified Jesus, standing near me, and heard His voice and so no longer do I doubt the claim that many have seen Him."

How deep was the silence in which he proceeded to tell of his soul's adventure by the roadside near Damascus! His face shone with the light which three times I had seen, when he spread out his vision of the mighty things to come—the human race organized in a

great, peaceful brotherhood of good will for mutual help. And well I remember that this was a part of his vision:

"We are to build the temple of all men. Its foundations shall cross the seas, the deserts, and the sown lands. Its rafters shall span the firmament as did that rainbow of the time of Noah. Its windows shall overlook the long caravans marching between the eternities. Its High Priest and Master shall be Jesus Christ, its pilgrims all the children of men. Compared with that temple, the one at Jerusalem is but a toy house. It is a mighty task, this creating of a new world, but we shall not fail if we have the spirit of the Almighty Creator in our souls turning our weakness into strength, our timidity into courage, our love into that faith which shall be equal to the tearing down of strongholds."

He ceased amid cries of protest and approval, and as we were leaving the synagogue a crowd of those of our faith, among whom were a goodly number convinced by the power of his words, pressed about us. As many as could seized his hands and garments and kissed them. Often I heard the hateful word "blasphemer" hurled at him over the heads of our friends by haughty, stubborn Pharisees. With difficulty we reached the two litters of Ananias. As we rode to his house, Paul was in a merry mood. He gossiped cheerfully.

"Did you see that fat old Pharisee with a long beard who called me a blasphemer?" he asked.

"I did not observe him, for my eyes were upon you," I answered.

"I'll warrant it is years since he has seen his feet. The Greeks have a saying that there is no room for noble sentiment in a fat belly. You look sad, my pretty maid. Of what are you thinking?"

"I am thinking of the mighty power of words when one's soul is in them. I shall never forget your words or the look of you when they came from your lips."

"Often have I thought of that when I have listened to you," he said. "It was chiefly the look of you. I have heard that when Demosthenes' speech against Æschines was being recited before the latter at Rhodes, he said: 'They are stinging periods, but the thing that angered me most was the look of him when he spoke them.'"

"How different were you!" I said. "I saw the look of my Master in your face."

"Why should it not be so?" he asked. "I am become one of His children, as you are. It is a mystery, like a man's resemblance to his mother or his father."

A little silence fell and then he added:

"You helped to make my lantern ready."

"And it hath a penetrating light," I answered. "It showed me new and great things."

And he said: "Why should it not be so? Every eye hath its own vision. You and I look at Damascus and we see different cities. The colors you behold are not the same to me."

Again a little silence, and then he asked:

"Have you seen your beloved one?"

"I find that he has gone to Antioch."

"Is the fortunate man Apollos?"

"He is the one I love above all men," was my

answer. "He found me a heathen and like a gentle shepherd led me out of the darkness. I would die for him, as I would die for my Master. Because they are Jews I love the Jewish people, in spite of all the wrongs I have suffered."

He answered: "The love of one noble heart for another leads unto that greater path of love by which all men must travel if they would find the gate of Heaven."

"I have found it a goodly preparation for the new birth," I answered.

Again for a little time he was silent. A sigh shook his breast as he answered: "I, too, have felt the power of it. You will marry. My bride shall be the truth of God and no other; my children shall be those who through me have found it; my paths to my task shall be the long highways; my home the place in which I find myself."

In a moment we heard the voice of a crier, saying: "Tiberius Cæsar is dead. Caius Cæsar is Emperor of Rome."

"God give him wisdom and a generous heart!" my companion exclaimed. "It was known in Jerusalem that the old emperor was on his deathbed."

News from Apollos in a letter to my host awaited me at the house of Ananias. There had been a great earthquake in Antioch. A part of the city had been shaken down. A large number of people had been killed and injured. He was doing what he could to relieve the suffering of the victims. He urged Ananias to send food and clothing and medicines and to see the people of our faith in Damascus and beg them to do likewise. Of me he wrote:

If my beloved Doris has arrived will you send her on to me? I need her love and her help—her love because I am lonely and only half myself with my thoughts ever wandering away down the highways in the south; her help because I find here, in this wicked city, a promising vineyard. Her Greek and her gift of eloquence would be as useful as another strong right hand. It is the language of Antioch. So if she be with you, give her my love and a kiss on her lips for me and see that she has safe conduct to the north and up the pleasant valley of the Orontes.

Immediately Paul and Ananias began to make plans to succor the afflicted people of Antioch. Paul and I and others of our faith were to take a small caravan of camels, laden for relief, with physicians, food, and medicines, up the highway to Antioch and there do what we could to assist Apollos in his work.

On the morrow my host gave me a generous supply of money and sent me away with his steward in a litter to help with the buying. He and Paul set out to hire physicians to make the journey with us.

Now the most of our buying was done in a great store where wheat and corn and fruits from the fertile vales of the south were displayed and sold to the people. I bartered with a man whose face I had seen before, albeit where I could not recall. Of his past life I questioned him but found no light in his answers. He spoke with enthusiasm of the new faith and of Saul's preaching in the synagogue.

"He will preach no more in this city for a time," I said. "He will go with our caravan to Antioch."

Ananias had neither wife nor children. My little son amused him, and he begged me to leave the lad in his house while I was gone to Antioch. That I was glad to do.

Before the day ended we were moving northward, I on my desert steed, our goods packed in great casks and roped to the backs of ten camels. So, before we were known as Christians, our first goodly enterprise in Christian charity began.

In the last hour before we started on our march, Ananias decided to keep Paul in Damascus, evidence of the profound effect of his preaching having come to the rich convert from many parts of the city. I counted it a misfortune to be thus bereft of the companionship of my new friend since I had gained wisdom by sitting at his feet.

And here begins another of the beloved mysteries through which the light of my faith has been shining these many years. We set out, and this I observed before the day's march ended, that one of our camel drivers was the man with whom I had bartered.

The second evening of our journey we camped on a grassy plain near a forest of cedars by a full-flowing brook. The camels were unladen so that they could feed and rest in comfort. Ananias had sent with me a faithful Syrian slave who was a eunuch. He cared for my horse, and bore on his own a tent and at night spread it and slept by its door, and brought me food and water and rugs. Never had I known such comfort on a journey.

We had gotten live coals in the tent of a shepherd and as the night fell we gathered sticks in the cedar forest and built a blazing fire by the brook side. We sat on our rugs around it, for the evening was cool, to speed the time with song and story in the fashion of Eastern travelers.

Now it befell that one of our camel drivers was a

famous story-teller and magician. His name was Imre and as we gathered it was on many voices. At first, standing in the firelight, he told us a thrilling love tale of the desert, or rather chanted it in the way of the story-tellers of the great waste. Then he performed for us the most astonishing magic I had seen.

He emptied a great earthen crock in which our bread had been carried. All were asked to look into it and be sure that it was empty. That done, he set it in the light where all could see and waved his hands above it. He invited us to come and look into it again. This we did and found it filled with rose leaves. He went to a near tree and touched one of its branches with his wand and a shower of golden apples fell upon the ground. Other things he did, each increasing our amazement, and while we were under the spell of his magic he went to the row of casks which had been taken from the backs of the camels and which stood on end in the firelight not ten cubits from where I sat. He tapped on the top of one of these with an iron hammer. Immediately we heard a beautiful bird song in the cask. He invited me and others to come and listen. We put our ears against the wooden staves. Within them we could hear the song of the nightingale. It rang out, as often I had heard it in the groves at night. Then I could hear the bird shaking its wings. Our mouths opened with astonishment.

Looking down at the cask I observed that a circle of small holes had been bored close to the hoop that bound its top. The magician waved us back to our places. When we were seated he tapped on the top of another cask and within it we heard immediately

the barking of a jackal, and when he tapped another it rang with the howling of a hyena.

We sat enthralled by this mighty magic while the performer brought a number of bows and arrows and threw them down and summoned nine of his companions in the caravan. When they had come he bade them take the weapons and be ready to slay the beasts when they were released. I being alarmed by such vivid mimicry, arose and stood looking in breathless wonder. The others in our party—there were twenty of us—did as I had done. A Roman physician stood near me. While the camel drivers were playfully trying the bows, he whispered:

"I think that this great sorcerer has put us all in a dream. Where, save in the East, could one see the like of this?"

The magician smote and broke the tops of the three casks whence the sounds had come. Then a kind of stumble in my heart. The illusion swiftly vanished. We were facing a stern reality. Bardanes and two of his mighty bowmen leaped from their hiding places. They seized bows and stood with arrows on the string. The camel drivers fled as if in a panic of astonishment.

Before we could realize the fullness of the deception which had been put upon us, there were threatening bows on every side. We were hemmed in and afraid to move. Bardanes, lately called Hazar, stood in the firelight, in torn garments, his dusty face clouded with anger. He held a bow in one hand, a bundle of arrows in the other. Thus standing, he cried out:

"I seek the man who brought soldiers to my palace and burned it and slew my wife and more than a hun-

dred of my friends. He is Saul of Tarsus and is here among you. Let him stand forth."

I walked toward him, saying: "Saul of Tarsus is not here. He is not anywhere in this world. He is dead."

The sight of me filled him with amazement. As I drew near him I saw tears in his eyes. Thus he addressed me:

"Fair one of the friendly heart! who left me in the green valley when my beloved one stood at my side. Say you he is dead?"

"O Hazar, lover of the poor! I assure you that Saul of Tarsus is as dead as Shamgar the son of Anath."

"I cannot believe you."

He drew a torch from the fire and with it went about among the men of our party surveying the face of each. He returned to my side, demanding:

"Was he not preaching in the synagogue at Damascus? Did he not go to live at the house of the rich Jew, Ananias?"

I answered, "Not he, but another. And now, friend of my heart, I will tell you the whole truth. He is dead and born again of the Spirit of God. Now he loves you as a brother and would mourn with you for your loss and do everything in his power to help you."

Hot with wrath, these words were his answer:

"I will have none of his love. It is the love of the lion for his prey. O fair one of the gentle voice! your sweet-sounding talk of mysteries cannot turn me aside. I will have my revenge and you shall help me to get it."

Shouting to the men around us, he commanded: "Anar, Micah, Joseph, and Simon, bring twelve horses and a good store of food." To us he added: "If any one of you stirs an arrow from my bow will find his heart."

The horses were brought and made ready. My own was among them. Food was stored in the saddlebags. Hazar held my horse and commanded me to mount. With bow half drawn he called his men, one by one, to come and each take horse. They had been the camel drivers of our caravan.

"Why do you tear me from my friends?" I asked.

He made no answer but tied a cord to the bit of my horse and, when they were all mounted, he lashed his side and our whole troop sprang out of the firelight into the darkness. Soon we were streaming southward at a swift gallop in the great Roman highway.

We rode on through the night and not a word was spoken to my knowledge. The day was breaking when we halted by a fountain at the roadside to refresh ourselves and the horses with food and drink. Then Hazar said to me:

"I like your golden hair and dark eyes! The thought is in my mind that you would make a good wife for me. You could fare worse. I have much gold. I am the richest merchant in Syria with a great market in Damascus, albeit my interests are credited to other men. My caravans are on all the highways."

Then the place where I did my bartering was his, I thought. It had been easy for him to lay a snare for us. Indignantly I exclaimed: "And you pretend to be a friend of Apollos!"

"Oh, yes, but revenge is sweeter than friendship," he answered. "If you would not be my wife, I will make it easy for you to pay your ransom. Before midday we shall be near Damascus. I can not enter the city because there are those who would like to take my head away from me. It is a pretty compliment, but in truth I need my head more than they do! It is my only plaything. You see, the new Roman governor has learned that I am abroad. My head with its secrets would be a fine pot of gold! His soldiers are seeking me. There is a guard at every gate to seize me when I leave or enter. Such is the honor of emperors! I have to exercise great prudence in getting in and out of cities. I came to Damascus to find Saul of Tarsus and I left it sure, as I thought, of meeting him. Now this is the price of your ransom if it be your will to part with me. Give me your word that when we are come within sight of the city you will enter it with one of my men and bring the new-born Saul back with you. Your word is enough for me. Tell him that a rich merchant, who is a heathen, would learn of him the secret of being born again. It's a great thing when Death is searching for one to be able to be born again."

He smiled as if he would have me know that he thought this talk of the new birth was childish.

"You say that you will take my word. Why say you that, O Hazar?" I asked.

"Because I know that you would not deceive me," he answered. "I trust you."

"You trust me because you have seen me tested and you know that you cannot lay my honor in the dust. When I left your palace I wrote your name in my

list of friends, O Hazar! I had broken your bread and seen you turning unto better things. I had great hope of you. Sooner would I have died than do you any mischief. But I like not this threat of yours. That is from the evil heart of the bandit Bardanes."

"Your voice is like the wind on a bulrush," he answered. "I forgot that Bardanes is dead."

I said: "On the road to Damascus a report came to me that you were slain."

He smiled, saying: "The man who can slay me is not yet born. I shall live to see twelve Cæsars come and go. The stars have told me that. And in your time ten will pass. He who was slain with many more was the faithful Istob who resembled me and who commanded my dart throwers and bowmen. My beloved Ila would have escaped had she not been walking with her maids in the garden. Her time had come. I was shut in by flames and fled by a passage made for the old emperor through the heart of the hills."

"Oh, the beautiful palace!" was my sorrowful exclamation. "I shall never forget it or its mistress who had long been a friend to me and whose beauty put me in mind of the stories I have heard of the queen of Egypt in the time of the first Cæsar."

He turned away and looked toward the rising sun, shaking his head and saying in a voice broken by his sorrow: "You know not how I loved her. She had a soul like yours, O daughter of Heaven! She led me out of the way of evil. My thirst for revenge has been like the fiery thirst of the desert."

"Put it from you," I urged. "Drink of the water of life. If she had a soul like mine, and I doubt it

not, purge your own and prepare it to meet her in paradise."

He turned to me, eagerly saying: "Tell me again the way to paradise, for I am sure that my beloved is there."

I told him that little story of the rich man who came, saying: "Good Master, what shall I do to be saved?" as I had heard it from the lips of Peter.

Hazar, like the other rich man, was very sorrowful. He stood, his arms folded across his breast, like one looking at an object in the far distance. For a little I did not speak, hoping for some sign of what was passing in his soul.

"The great change has come to Saul," I said. "If you would have it, forgive him even as he has forgiven all his enemies. I show you the way to Ila in paradise."

He pointed toward the far horizon, saying: "Do you see yon forest-covered hills? They are more than a half day's journey from where we stand. Bring Saul to me there. I will do him no harm nor will I suffer any one to harm him. I will only question him, for he has knowledge that would serve me."

"I will ask my friend to come to you on yonder hills," I answered. "About midday on the morrow you may look for us."

He called his band together. The horses were brought up from the field in which they were grazing. All mounted save the one left to be my guide. Hazar, waving his hand to me, and followed by his men, rode away toward the distant, purple hills. We watched them vanishing into littleness on the far plain. Then we mounted and rode to the city.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DRAMATIC DEPARTURE OF PAUL

THE good man Ananias gave me a kindly welcome. I told him what had befallen us on the road to Antioch but did not give the name of the man who was seeking Saul of Tarsus.

"It is Hazar, the mysterious!" he exclaimed. "And a mercy it is that our brother Paul did not fall in his hands. He is a strange man. It is known that he was a friend of Cæsar and his officers. They have betrayed him and are now seeking his property. But Hazar has outwitted them. His ownership is so concealed that they dare not confiscate his goods or his warehouses. He is not altogether bad. Therein is the secret of his success. He is generous and has many friends. Every man in his employ is content and prosperous."

"How is our brother Paul?" I asked.

"The thing that I feared has come to pass. His experience has been so deep and full, so near to God, his way of telling it so convincing, that the powers of darkness felt the peril of this mighty flood of light from Heaven. The rich men and the rulers have combined to stop it. They plan to destroy him. Until the storm of their fury has passed I dare not let him preach again. I have him concealed in the house of a friend of mine. He is in no way discouraged, but thinks it good to halt. He says that our progress

might easily be so swift that it would bring the legions of Rome upon us."

"Would he not better leave the city and go to Antioch?" I asked.

"In these days it would be a risk to try it," he answered. "I learn that guards are at every gate to seize him."

A thought was pressing on me and I said: "I wonder why the Almighty God permits His plans to be so delayed and baffled."

Calmly the wise man answered: "God is not a revolutionist or a mighty magician. He has to take men as they are, not as He would have them, and build them up until they are fit to have and hold His spirit. You would not pour wine into a leaky, filthy vessel."

"But did He not work a revolution in the heart of Saul and change it in an hour?"

"I have talked with our beloved brother of that great thing," he answered. "Saul was prepared for the change. He was discontented and longing for peace and the Lord chose him for a helper. Consider this, my cherished one, what a useless thing this world would be if, by some mighty magic, all men were changed in an hour. Would it not be a world of rather flimsy, spineless angels? No man may have peace until he has achieved a desire for it, until he has built up in his body a person, a love of good things that fit him for high companionship. That is what our great brother would tell you and that is what he has."

"Of old he had a learned, beauty-loving, God-seeking, tremendous personality," I said.

And my friend answered: "It towered like the cedars of Lebanon and death was in its shadow. But

this must be said of Saul. He was honestly in error. There was no hypocrisy in the man. He was sincere. He hated the cruelties he practiced. The thought has come to me that when Jesus looked down upon this eager, rugged, human spirit, striving to please its God, He saw the new soul of Israel—the one man among the living, undiscovered before, whose vision could embrace the world."

I said: "The man of Tarsus had strength, honor, character, intellect. He needed only grace and light."

These were the words of Ananias: "They came to him. No sudden revolution was wrought. A great soul was crowned with a gift from Heaven."

"I envy you the good fortune you have had of being with him," I said.

"He hath told me many things for which I am the wiser," my host continued. "He looks not for the day of Christ to come save there be great need of it. He knows the world and foresees no quick overcoming of its errors. The struggle will be slow and painful and filled with many troubles. It has Rome and the heirs of Rome to reckon with. Our march is bound for unknown climes and distant ages."

It was a new thought and it oppressed me.

"To-morrow I wish to go to Apollos," I said.

"For a time I shall need you here," he answered. "Our new brother is silenced. Our people and their friends will meet in my house to-morrow and you will serve them well if you stay and bear witness. Our beloved Paul has told me that you have a great gift in telling of the mighty things you have seen."

I am almost ashamed to record that I shed tears because of this new delay. I spent what remained

of that day in sadness with my little son and in the writing of a long letter to Hazar which explained why it was impossible for me to keep my promise and expressed my great hope for him. This I dispatched by the guide who had come with me.

Now I say that on the morrow I was glad of my detention, for I was lifted up and my words to the thirsty crowd around me were like cups filled to the brim with living water. Many joined us and others were strengthened in their faith. I could not leave the fruitful field in the time of the harvest. So again and again I told my stories and the moon waned and still was I in Damascus.

Now there came a night of black darkness when even the stars were covered. I was sitting with Ananias in his library when he arose and whispered to me: "The chosen time has come when our brother Paul is to leave the city. The bloodthirsty ones are searching every house. His life is in peril here. He would see you before he goes. Will you come with me?"

I put on my cloak and went with him into the garden. There a litter and its bearers were awaiting us. He looked up into the sky and said: "I swear by Him who sitteth between the cherubim that I have seen no darker night."

We heard a whisper in the darkness: "All is well."

We took our seats in the litter and drew its curtains. In a moment we were beyond the gates. A long time we rode in silence. Soon I knew by the sound and number of the voices around us that we were passing through a part of the city known as the Vale of Pov-

erty. We entered streets where we could hear only the sounds of the zither and the harp in the houses of the rich. I was eager to look into the face of Paul and to hear his voice again and was asking myself if I would better tell him of his escape from the fury of Hazar, when our litter stopped.

I heard the whispered word "Maranatha." Ananias answered, "May it be soon," and drew the curtains. We were in the lighted court of a palace. A handsome bearded man of middle age in a richly embroidered robe kissed our cheeks and bade us welcome. Ananias turned to me and said:

"The name of this beloved man shall not pass my lips to-night. He is a convert and a friend of our brother Apollos."

We entered a great, stone house beautiful with mosaic floors and rugs of colors and designs that linger in my memory, and carved and polished woods. We climbed a spiral stairway, our leader carrying a lighted lantern, until my legs were weary. I knew that we were ascending a tower. Our climb ended at a narrow landing, paved with little cubes of white stone. The master of the palace rapped upon a door. It opened and Paul stood before us.

He seized my hands, exclaiming: "O lady of the great memories! When I think of you, even if I be hungry I forget to eat my bread. Let us sit together. I would have a few words with you and these other beloved ones before I go."

There were rugs, a couch, a desk on which were pen and ink and many sheets of vellum. The small room was paved as was the landing. A curtained window occupied an embrasure in the thick, stone wall

on one side. In a corner was a deep basket strongly woven of naked withes. A long cord was attached to handles on either side of it. Paul said as he sat on the bench by the desk:

"For many days I have been writing of the things in my heart. I had thought that it could be quickly done, but the more I write the more there is to be written. When I am safely delivered from my present peril you may think it proper for my pen to speak in the synagogue where my body can no longer stand. These pages are designed for those fat-sided Pharisees who grunt with the pigs of Aristippus and are content with making pork for hell."

Again anger was in his face, but how it differed from the wrath of Saul! He arose and came and took my hand in his and smiled as he looked into my face, saying: "This from me to Apollos: When anger rises to his lips ask him to look into your face and be quieted as often I have done."

He laughed as if thinking of his own folly and went on:

"Tell me again, so that these may hear it, of the healing of the giant Marsitas."

Again I told the wonderful story, and when I had finished the telling the owner of the palace said: "I think that the time is upon us when my man of the strong arms should come to help."

He opened the door and blew a blast on a silver whistle. Immediately we heard footsteps on the stairs below. Soon I was amazed to see, standing in the open doorway, the giant form of my beloved friend Marsitas. I ran to his arms. He lifted me up, as long ago he had been wont to do when I came to his home,

and kissed my cheek and embraced me. A sweet smile was on his brown, bearded face.

"Whence come you?" I asked.

"I journeyed from the house of Chuza in Galilee with Apollos and my children to Gerasa and later he sent for me to come here. I now labor in the gardens of this noble man of our faith."

"The light of Heaven is in him," said Paul. "It was I who did tread him down and crush his honest heart and fill his soul with a demon and he has forgiven me."

Marsitas's memory darkened his face with sadness. For a breath he stood looking down at the man who had thus spoken. He sighed as he said: "I am also as one born again."

Paul answered: "And have learned the great art of forgiving. Is it not a wonderful thing the like of which the world has never witnessed between men? I put my life in the hands of Marsitas, having confessed that I have done him the greatest wrong that one man may do another. My beloved, I am ready to go. Bring the basket."

Marsitas brought it and tested the cord attached to its handles. There was a great coil of the latter, for the tower was high, being builded on top of the city wall. The window opened like a door. Our giant brother pushed the long basket through its opening. Paul bade us good-by, saying: "Unless the sleep of death should come to me, this shall be only the first of many partings."

Marsitas ran the long loop of cord between two iron rollers, made fast to the sill of the window, and stood holding it.

Ananias helped our friend to clamber over the wall's edge into the basket. We gave him his lantern and a bag of things made ready for his comfort. He sank out of sight as Marsitas began to pay out the cord. Slowly it fell in the black darkness. Near the end of the loop it slackened. Then Marsitas said:

"I feel the signal. His feet are on the ground."

Said our host: "A slave is below to give him fire for his lantern and at the second milestone on the highway a horse will be waiting for him."

When the basket had been drawn up I leaned out of the window and looked down the wall to the ground some sixty cubits below, a long drop through the black night. I could see the lantern of Paul slowly threading its way between the trees. How often have I thought of that little box of light as it moved away in the darkness! There was such a vast area of darkness. Suddenly for an instant prophetic flashes of lightning swept it away. We stood watching until the glow of the lantern was lost in a deep vale.

When I had returned to the home of Ananias he made me happy with these words: "Marsitas will come here in the morning to make the journey with you to Antioch. Our great brother advises that we keep our heads down here in Damascus and hold our peace until the storm has abated."

So it came to pass that on the morrow I set out again on my white steed to join my beloved Apollos with Marsitas at my side to help and protect me. My friend carried on his horse a small tent and ample stores of bread and meat. My only burden, in addition to a change of garments, was a bag of gold and the boy Julian.

We went on with no adventure worth recording until the third night of our journey. When the sun was low we saw smoke rising from a vale among hills west of the highway.

"I think that we shall find there the house of a shepherd," said Marsitas, and we turned our horses toward the smoke. We had dipped down into a shadowed vale, I riding in front, when an arrow fell in my path not twenty cubits ahead of me. I heard the whizzing of it and saw it come down and shatter itself on the farther side of the vale we were descending. A tissue of vellum attached to a fragment of the shaft fluttered in the breeze. On it I read the words writ with ink:

"Turn back. A bad lot of pious men are camped in the deep vale."

Who but Hazar could have written that? I asked myself as my companion, who had put the message in my hands, mounted his horse. I faced about, saying to Marsitas:

"Come, let us make haste. There is danger ahead."

We hurried back to the highway and northward some three miles. As we proceeded the thought came to me that Hazar and his men must have been camped on the farther side of the vale we were descending when his fleet messenger had halted us. He had seen and recognized the white horse.

We rode up the great hills that overlooked the ancient plain of Marsayas. We passed a heap of ashes and saw in it many small bones half consumed by fire. On a rocky height, a furlong from the road, we set up our tent as the night fell. We were on a

grassy level not forty cubits square in the midst of which rose the trunk of an ancient cedar with branches high above our heads. It was a notch in the lofty hills. We were standing, although we knew it not, on the height known as the Altar of Kaivan. Westward the land fell so steeply to the deep, green vale beyond that no creature could descend it.

"Here we shall be able to see our enemies if they be coming near," said Marsitas. "Beyond there is a trail into the valley."

We tethered our horses to the cedar tree and gave them ground corn out of the bags and cut green herbs for them.

In a long niche cut in the tree trunk stood a frowning idol carved in wood.

"I think that this is a place where fools come to worship," said Marsitas.

I said: "I like not the look of that thing. It may bring ill luck to us."

Marsitas laughed, saying: "Such talk is not for us. Does it not show how thin is the wall between wisdom and madness?"

We sat and refreshed ourselves with bread and meat and drink. For a time Marsitas played at tossing stones with my little son while I looked down into the valley rapidly filling with darkness.

Suddenly I thought that some mighty hand had smitten the hills. They seemed to shake with terror. Then came a sound like that of the rending of great towers. Looking over the edge I saw a hilltop near us pouring downward into the valley as if it were melted. Vast rocks as big as a house were leaping and plunging and thundering into the gloomy abyss

and their footsteps on the flinty side of the range rocked the earth and crashed like the hammers of Vulcan. The sounds shook my heart. Suddenly a silence broken by the cries of my son and the whinnying and struggling of the horses to free themselves! I stood confused and terrified. The courage and good sense of Marsitas quickly restored me.

He quieted the beasts and the boy and lifted the latter in his arms as he said: "It's a big landslide. Be not afraid. They come always after a great earthquake."

Later, while he sat near me in the thickening gloom, the boy asleep in his lap, he said: "The falling of yon hilltop reminds me of certain sayings of our Master. I have heard Him speak words like the whirl and tumble of those mighty rocks. They make me feel the power of His hand in whose hollow the seas are measured."

He rose and laid the sleeping boy on his rug by the tent side and lifted his hand, saying:

"'Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away.'

"'Before Abraham was I am.'"

"These words are like high mountains. My thoughts have climbed to their summit."

I was astonished by this from my friend Marsitas. Until then he had been only a kindly, industrious, and watchful servant on our journey. Now he spoke like a prophet. Since that hour often have I seen the unlettered husbandman incredibly lifted up after he has tasted the heavenly gift, for many things come with it as they did to Peter and Matthias and James and John.

He brought a rug and sat down beside me, the night being warm, and I begged him to share with me the treasures of his heart. And he told me, as we sat together under the stars, of that night in Jerusalem when our Master was seized and those He loved fled and hid away. A friend of Marsitas had heard those words come trembling out of His parched and bloody mouth:

"Father, forgive them. They know not what they do."

And then Marsitas said: "I think that no words like these had ever come from any lips. In them is the beginning of a new world. They, too, remind me of the moving of the great rocks. *They knew not what they did.* Have not our people always acted without knowledge? Were not the foolish ones who slew Him like the rocks of yon hilltop which knew not what they were doing? Everything in their way was destroyed. The world has been as foolish as the wild ass. It has never learned to use its intellect."

"What mean you by that?" I asked.

"My daughter, think of the gods of old Hellas, and of Rome," he went on. "They are like the dreams of children. I cannot think that any person really believed in them. Not one of those gods was ever anything but a name in a pretty story. Now every one laughs at them or shudders at their villainess. We Jews have been so scared of our God we dared not hold up our heads. Our intellects have been like yon horses tied to a tree. We knew what we ought not to do, but what we ought to do we had not rope enough to consider. We have appointed Moses to do our thinking for us. How can a dead

man solve living problems? Long ago our people should have known that Jehovah did not delight in murder and cruelty and vengeance. Would you have me tell you why I think that the words of our Master shall not pass away?"

"Let me hear it," I urged.

"Well, then, my daughter, it is because they give us a God we can love and believe in. Is it not good sense that love is better than hate and forgiveness better than vengeance? Are they not the things that bring peace and good will to men?"

"My beloved Marsitas! It is a great gift which has come to you," I said.

He answered: "If that be so it is because my intellect is untied and my Master ceases not to be my shepherd. I am in the green pastures. My hunger and thirst are satisfied. Think what is coming when all men are like you and the beloved Apollos."

"I long to see him," I said.

"And I to see you in each other's arms. He is like a tall cedar with the wind of heaven in its branches. He talks much of his love of you and once on a night like this he told of your meeting in the desert and of your journey through the great waste and the coming of the lions. What a miracle was that!"

"And he keeps his love of me?" I asked, for it was a theme grateful to my ear.

"Aye, and he speaks often of that time when you stood in his garden with the child in your arms. The sight of a mother and a child always reminds him of Mary and her Little One."

"With this thought I will lie down to rest," I said.

I pulled the rug with its beloved burden under the tent cover and lay down by my sleeping son and drew a blanket over us. It was in my mind as I lay thinking that the coming of Jesus in the humble village of Bethlehem had made birth a sacred thing. Was a time coming when a mother and a child would remind all good people of that scene? Then a deep regret came to me and in the midst of my praying I fell asleep.

I was awakened far in the night by the sound of footsteps. Silently I arose and peered through the tent opening. The figure of a man stood against the clear, starry sky with hands uplifted. A dim light was playing on his back. He was whispering. Had Marsitas lost his mind again? I stepped from under the tent cover and spoke his name. It was not Marsitas but a bearded man who turned and approached me. Where was my friend? Had he been slain while I was sleeping?

Far below us toward the highway a great fire was burning. Its light flashed upon the face of the stranger as he put his hand upon my shoulder. His feet were unsteady, his voice thick. He had been drinking much wine.

"See," he said, pointing into the sky. "There is old Kaivan, between the Lion and the Scatterers. His look from that House of Heaven is the father of pestilence and the ruin of high halls. This night we must try to appease him with a sacrifice."

My eyes were now strong in the dim light and I saw two of his companions standing near me.

"What mean you by these words?" I asked.

"Kaivan asks for your child," he said. "In yonder fire let us give him to the great god of the slow wing."

That moment left its footprint on me. This man was one of those worshipers of Moloch, who loved the blood of children. He would buy the favor of his evil god with my little son.

I spoke calmly: "My God is greater than Kaivan. He made the earth and all the stars in heaven. Show me the star Kaivan."

It was a dark night. There was only one open door in the sky through which stars were visible. He pointed at a glowing one far northward across the valley. As we looked, three times in quick succession we saw it vanish and reappear.

I laughed loudly and said: "Foolish man! It is a signal lantern of the Roman legion on one of the high, far hilltops."

He stood a moment gazing at this glowing light.

"It is Kaivan urging me to act," he muttered. Turning to one of his helpers, he commanded: "Bring the child."

The man addressed entered the tent and seized my son, who began to cry out in terror.

I called aloud for Marsitas. I heard his answer. It came from the direction of the fire. He was more than a hundred cubits from where we stood. I struggled with the men.

Marsitas's coming was like the charge of a lion. Those misguided ones were appalled by his looming, prodigious figure and the swiftness of his attack. They did not even flee. My boy, dropped from the hands of the man who held him, ran to my side. There was a mighty stir in the darkness, where the three men grappled with Marsitas. I heard the smit-

ing and falling and rending of garments and creaking of bones. Being faint with terror I saw little of what passed. Two of the intruders were hurled over the edge to roll and hurtle down the steep slope to the valley. The other lay at the feet of the lionlike Marsitas.

"O messenger of Kaivan! Have mercy on me," said the madman in a drunken voice.

Marsitas lifted the prostrate one and holding his arm led him to my side. He asked: "What mischief was in the hearts of these men while I was watching their friends by yonder fire?"

I answered: "They sought to burn my child to please the great star, Kaivan."

"That is what I feared." As Marsitas spoke he shook the head of his prisoner as if it had been a knot on a rope's end. "The fools were hid in this near thicket and they saw me leave you."

My protector turned to me and asked: "Is this the chief whose arrow fell in our path?"

"It is not the chief," I answered.

"Bring a cord from my saddle."

I did as he bade me. I looped its end and he put it over the neck of the stargazer, saying, "Now if your comrades give us any trouble I will twist your head off and hurl it at them."

"His chief is the richest man in Syria," I said.

"They are like all save those who follow our King," Marsitas continued. "They use their intellects only in making war and money. In their worship they are like the sheep of the pasture. What more foolish than the thought that a star in the sky would be

pleased by the murder of a child? But, after all, is it not like slaying a lamb to please Jehovah?"

He bound his prisoner to a tree while I loosed the beasts. In a little time we were packed and ready to move.

We found Hazar in a drunken sleep near the fire and awoke him. His men were singing and dancing. I told the chief what had happened.

Sadly he answered: "I have been trying to drown my sorrows in wine. It is an evil thing. I shall try it no more, for these are men who do strange things when wine is in them. They go back to the paths of their fathers. Come, I will take you on your way. My men are scattered through the hills. I shall protect you."

Soon he mounted his horse and set out with us.

For a long time Hazar slept as he rode. When he awakened we talked to him of his folly and of the true God.

"You are like Him in this that you love the poor," I said. "And when I saw you last I had hope that the new light was coming to you."

"And I had hope that it would heal my broken heart," said Hazar mournfully.

Marsitas answered: "A demon rides into a man on floods of wine. My God would have you make your mind the servant of your soul. What is bad for you, avoid."

We rode for a time in silence and when the light of day had come we halted by a fountain to refresh ourselves and our beasts.

The blood of Hazar had cooled. Marsitas said: "Now you may go to your friends."

The great chief turned to me and sought my forgiveness.

"We forgive all injuries," I answered. "Moreover, I shall pray God to fill you with His grace and light."

Hazar looked at me in astonishment, and in his answer I saw the thing which had shut the light from his soul. "I like this God of yours. But would He have me burn my wealth as a sacrifice and go back to the vineyard and the wine press?"

"He would not have you burn it," I answered. "If it is wrongly come by He would have you give it to those in need. Then get wealth if it is in your power to do so by honest means. He would not have you toil in the dirt of the fields, for well-got wealth, if it be wisely used, may be a mighty servant of His love and mercy."

"Then he is a God of wisdom," said Hazar.

"And wisdom is the corner stone of our faith," Marsitas answered. "Light comes into a man only through his intellect. Never cease to use it."

Hazar smiled as he said: "My intellect is like my dog. He is a good dog, but now and then he runs away. If I get drunk he will have nothing to do with me. When I am sober and sorry he comes back."

He turned from me suddenly as we parted, saying: "Hereafter may your God hide your face from me. I would see you no more."

With those words he waved his hand and strode away from us up a steep hill toward the south as if climbing to the sky. Often have I wondered what secret was hid in his saying. At the top of the hill

he put his hands to his mouth and shouted: "Though my face turns away I travel toward you."

That evening we were at Heliopolis in a beautiful green valley with high hills shutting out the north, east, and west winds. They were covered with thick forests. A stream of clear, cold water flowed southward through the valley. On the hill slopes were temples and Roman villas and elaborate, far-reaching gardens.

Outside the city we met a Jew who greeted us with our secret word. He told us that many people of rank and wealth came to this vale of the highlands from the capital and the cities of the south in the warm season. Among them was a wealthy, young Roman who had become a follower of our God in Cæsarea. I dare not mention his name because, as I write, his life is in peril and a word from me now might increase his torment or bring down the sword upon his neck. To my surprise the man we had met faced about and led us to the palace of the Roman. The latter and his wife gave us a friendly welcome. Having heard of me through Apollos, who had lodged with them on his way to Antioch, they took me to their hearts. As I entered the atrium of the palace the lady kissed my cheeks, saying:

"For a long time we have been expecting you. Every day a servant has gone out on the highway to meet you and bring you hither. An old friend of yours has been waiting here to see you. Before the meeting I will take you to my dressing room."

There two woman slaves from Africa bathed and rubbed me with ointment and washed and dressed my hair and covered me with beautiful, silken garments. I was surveying myself with deep satisfaction in a

mirror when my hostess entered and embraced me with exclamations of delight. Her words were like music to my ear: "I have heard much of your beauty and now I see it undimmed by the dust of travel. Come, let me proudly show you to your friend."

"Tell me, is Apollos here?" I asked of her, burning with excitement.

"Would that he were here," she answered. "He is in Antioch. The friend you will see is a lady converted by Apollos in Damascus."

It was the Lady Thamyris, once the mistress of Caius, the new Emperor of Rome, she who had helped me to escape from the house of old Varus in the evil city. She had aged rapidly in the years since I left her. Ill health and many cruelties had marked her face and grayed her hair. Her form, once erect and beautiful, had begun to sag.

"Your escape was fortunate," she said. "You have kept your youth and health. I have been kicked and starved and beaten, and, as you may see, the top of my right ear was bitten off. I am like a ruined temple of old Babylon."

"And you were thrown away like a broken vase," I remarked.

"I was put on a ship bound for Syria and warned never to return to Rome. I went to Damascus and being skilled with the needle was able to support myself. I should have become a ragged, pathetic woman begging in the streets save that I heard of one who was a friend of those who had neither friends nor hope. I sought him out. Through him I found the Light and many good friends and the peace which is in your heart and theirs. I sew. I take comfort to those in need of it. Wherever I go I

carry the truth and the peace it gives me and am happy."

I embraced her, exclaiming: "O the miracles I have seen. You are one of them. I wish that you could have gone with me that night from the banquet room of old Varus."

Said she: "It was one of the bad nights. Caius would have set out in quest of you had not Cassius Cheria engaged him in a bloody quarrel. There was bad feeling between the two. Caius thought him effeminate and was wont to address him as Julia or Paulina."

We had a long talk, no other part of which is needed for this narrative. That night a number came to hear my stories and when I set out in the morning my hostess promised that if we could come to Heliopolis to be married she would give us a wedding.

Our ride through the great vale of the Orontes and the Syrian Gates is one of the memories which have made the world I live in dear to me. The sun above distant purple heights throwing its golden flood over green slopes cropped by flocks and herds and spotted with groves; the long, blue shadows, flung on the lighted floor of the valley were fair to look upon. Yet half their beauty, I am sure, came of that mysterious thing going up to him and coming down to me as I neared the Rome of the East.

We entered the city glorified by the Seleucidæ with temples, basilicas, statues from old Hellas, baths, aqueducts, and colonnades. Such grandeur I had never seen. We came into the great Corso, which crossed the city straight as an arrow, flanked by four ranges of exquisite marble columns and two covered galleries.

It was a city of abundant and beautiful waters. We passed a vast basin of carved granite in the middle of the Corso, with water spouting high out of a dragon's mouth and falling in a perpetual shower on a group of marble nymphs in the pool it made.

A procession of naked maidens with only a fillet around them passed bearing banners which announced the coming festival of Naïouma.

I stopped at the booth of a money changer to learn how to go to reach the home of Simeon the Jewish merchant with whom Apollos lived. It was beyond the Pantheon near the citadel. On our way we saw in the midst of the city lofty mountains of perpendicular rock, three to four hundred cubits high. On their summits were plane trees and flower-covered bushes and blossoming vines drooping gracefully over the edges of the precipice. We were covered with shadows, but these gardens in the air were still in the sunlight.

"It is as beautiful as Athens," I said to Marsitas.

"And as wicked," he answered. "Often have I heard of its heathen arts. How wise were the Jews to keep their God in the sky."

"I do not understand you."

"Never have they permitted any image to be made of Him. It has helped Him to hold His people and keep them apart. Dwelling under his pavilion of mystery He hath created the eye of faith. We may make Him as beautiful as we can but only in our thoughts. How it has cheapened Apollo to put him in marble on the unclean, crowded streets!"

"But did we not see the Son of God on the streets?" I asked.

"Aye, and we saw that in Him which no one of

us would dare try to show in wood or metal or stone. It was something not of this world, a deep mystery. The light in His eyes and countenance, the eloquence of His hands, the noble beauty of His form, the magic of His voice—we know them but have we any art which could help us to show them? Those who saw Him will try only to make His likeness with such material as their own flesh and blood and spirit. Then will they fail, albeit I think that Peter and Stephen and Joses have done very well."

I turned and looked into the face of my good friend, saying: "So have you, Marsitas."

"I—I am only a poor lonely toiler turned from death to life and trying to show his gratitude. I died that night of the raid. Only because of my great strength I live again here and not in paradise."

"A blessing is it for us who share your gift," I answered.

At last we found the great house of Simeon set in a garden like that of Ananias. Eagerly I sought my lover at its door. A servant admitted me. Simeon was writing at a desk in his librarium. He arose with friendly greetings.

"I am come to see Apollos," I said with a fear and trembling which came of searching his face.

"To give you the news of him is like cutting off my right hand," he answered.

"Oh, is he dead?" I groaned, covering my face.

Quickly he answered: "Be of good cheer, my beloved and beautiful one. He lives and soon you shall see him. But again he is in prison."

"Where?"

"At the citadel."

I reeled and he caught my arms as if in fear that I would fall. I suffered then for a little space a disappointment as bitter as any I had known.

"This time it is the Romans who are persecuting us," he explained. "One Petronius in command of the legion here has received orders from the emperor to place his image in the Temple at Jerusalem. The young Cæsar, intoxicated by his power, has exalted himself into a god and proposes that neither Jupiter nor Jehovah shall be more honored than he. Apollos expressed his disapproval of this folly and for that he was seized and cast into prison."

"Can I see him to-night?"

"Not until the morrow. You shall give me the happiness of abiding under my roof at least until he is free to take you where he will. In the beginning of the second watch to-morrow we shall go to see Apollos."

There was a little balcony called "the cage" on a side of the prison in the citadel of Antioch, close grated with iron bars, wherein, one by one, prisoners were permitted to stand in the presence of a guard to see their friends and the light of day. It was built for favored ones in response to the appeal of the rich and famous Appia, a kind-hearted Roman lady of the province, whose son had been a political prisoner under the wise Augustus. She had embellished the great Corso with many sculptured figures from old Hellas.

Outside this grated opening in the prison wall I spent a gloomy morning hour waiting for my lover. He came at last and these words of his are stored in my memory:

"My beloved! Hold up your head and let me see your countenance. Oh, it is like coming out of the desert at dawn and seeing green hills and a river! Now would I think the sun was shining. I know that you keep your love of me. It is in your face more beautiful than ever I have seen it."

And this was my answer: "I am near spent with this urge of my heart to find you. It has driven me far—through bitter disappointments."

Those words of his refreshed my spirit: "O right hand of me! Every soul is but a place for love to dwell in. It must have two guests or it cannot be content. And each of these it must find for itself: the love of its mate and the love of men. These will discover the one other guest it must have, the love of God. That is why I have sought you and suffered much for your sake and still I suffer. But now seeing you my heart sings with happiness. Soon shall I hold you in my arms."

Erect he stood as the terebinths of Mamre, the beauty of his face ennobled by the growing greatness of his spirit.

"Your words are like the breath of spring on the dead fields," I answered. "Will you soon be free?"

He said: "This is a little matter. I shall be free before the ides have come. Meanwhile there is much to do of which Simeon will tell you."

I was not permitted even to touch his hand. Soon the guard blew a blast on his whistle. My lover returned to his cell and I to the house of Simeon.

CHAPTER XV

IN THE TOILS OF ROMAN POLITICS

MARSITAS set out next day for Damascus. I dwelt in the house of Simeon and helped my host with the interrupted work of Apollos, giving what comfort we could to the homeless and injured victims of the earthquake. They were mostly poor, illiterate Greeks and Syrians who had lived in old houses and shaky hovels in the outer city. Simeon had given so freely to relieve them and to push the work of our brotherhood among rich and poor that he felt the need of great economy in his own household.

Every day I went to see my lover in "the cage." Soon the guards demanded gratuities which I was not able to pay oftener than once in three days. Months passed and Apollos was still in prison.

One day a stranger who was a fat and merry Greek, of an odd and cheerful manner of speech, rode to our gate. Simeon and I chanced to be standing near it in the garden. The stranger dismounted and holding the reins of his horse flung his fat legs about in a playful dance. It was then that I recognized him, having seen him twice before.

He stopped and looked at us with a smile on his large, homely, happy face, saying in his native tongue: "My friends, I am a spent arrow and have had a long flight."

"From whose bow?" Simeon asked.

"Good master, I would not deceive you; therefore I say from the silver bow of Apollo," the Greek answered. "My lies are like Homer's, I expect no man to believe them."

He paused and looked at us, adding: "Thanks for these smiles. I love to tarry where I find them. Forgive me if I take a little time to remind my legs that they were made to stand upon. They feel like the legs of a statue. I must convince them that I am not Zeus or Heracles."

Again he began to shuffle about playfully at the side of his horse while we began to laugh. He stopped and Simeon demanded:

"Who are you and what is your business?"

"Kind sir," he answered with a polite gesture. "Who *I* am is a matter of no importance. Unlike my person, my name has not even a feather's weight."

He put his hand in the bag hanging from his saddle and brought out two sacks of gold and held them up one in either hand and shook them, saying with a playful wink: "Gold chooses its associates with great care. The question is not who am *I* but who are *you*?"

"I am Simeon, a merchant of Antioch," my host answered.

Then said the stranger: "If you are Simeon of Antioch, gold and you are acquainted with each other. I could leave it here knowing that it would be well treated. Will you look me in the eye?—the right eye, if you please, sir, for my left one has been damaged. Thanks. I believe that you speak the truth, but I must have proof."

My host invited him to enter the house. This the stranger did and when convinced of the identity of the merchant he said: "Simeon of Antioch, look into my eye. This gold is from a good man of your faith. He wishes to help you and Apollos in your work among the poor and friendless people of Antioch. His name is not to be known to you. The gold bears the image and superscription of Cæsar. That is sufficient. It has been long in the sacks. It is in need of air and exercise. Do not keep it in confinement. This day let it begin to run about on merciful errands in the name of your great Prophet. Promise that you will not try to learn who I am or from whence I come. If you are faithful in these things I shall come again and bring further help to you."

He deposited the sacks of gold on a table and bowed and was departing when Simeon said:

"You must tarry here in my house and rest with us or my bread will be bitter for a month."

Again the fat legs of the stranger began to dance. He stopped suddenly, saying: "My legs, my unhappy legs, would have me tarry with you. They are fond of tarrying, but my intellect reminds me that I must not associate with the rich and powerful. My character is as yet unsullied by contact with honest men."

"Will you not tell us who you are?" Simeon asked.

"Alas! I know not," the stranger answered. "There is no one in all the world who can tell who I am. For many years I have sought to know, but in vain. I am a stranger even to myself. I never told the truth in my life but once and this is the once. I am grateful. May your God shower upon you a thousand blessings!"

With that he left us. And Simeon said: "I think that he is a servant of our wealthy Roman friend now in Heliopolis. Until the attitude of the new emperor is declared the Romans naturally fear to be publicly known as the subjects of a greater King."

In the days that followed, the giving of bread and meat, the repairing of broken homes and bodies, the preaching of the mighty Joses, now called Barnabas, and my own humble efforts as a witness finished the foundations of the great brotherhood in Antioch so well begun by Apollos. Thenceforward it was a thing to be reckoned with.

Mosaic layers, workers in brass, copper, and gold, blacksmiths, potters, marble cutters, arrowsmiths, makers of rams, darts, and javelins and those called cubatores (little god makers), oil grinders, architects, carpenters, plasterers, fishermen—all who earned their bread by the work of their hands—naturally took a special interest in the teaching of their great fellow toiler, the Carpenter of Nazareth, whose inspired followers were also humble folk. They came in great numbers to learn of the sayings and doings of their own prophet.

Among the patricians of Antioch there was a phrase which set them apart and crowned them with the contempt of the pretty-handed. They were called "pork eaters." Pork was cheap and abundant. That is why they ate it.

To this truth I bear witness: They were the cleanest-hearted, best-minded folk in the great city. Mainly their toil had kept them out of its mischief. Their nights were needed and used for rest. They had large families. With them life had many prob-

lems—chiefly those of food, clothing and taxes and that of improving the efficiency of their hands and keeping out trouble. In these problems they had learned to use their minds.

Members of these crafts were banded together for mutual help, counsel, and protection. They were insured against death, accident, and sickness. The notion had come to them that all men are born equal.

Now there was an ancient law which forbade marriage among the poor. In spite of this law, members of the banded brotherhoods, however poor, were beginning to marry the women of their choice. We, as had Peter, encouraged the practice, insisting that the poor had a right to be respectable.

So briefly I indicate how it came to pass that many of the toilers of Antioch gave their souls to our faith.

One day as I walked on the Corso I heard a crier saying: "A legion from Cæsar has landed and is coming to Antioch under command of the great Roman general, Vespasian."

Simeon and I secured from the legate a promise that my lover should be released on condition that he would engage under oath never to oppose any purpose of the emperor. He was also to announce publicly his resolve. Elated by our success, I took the news to Apollos.

"O beloved one, dearer than my life to me, you bring a great temptation," he said. "I long to be with you and my task. I am weary of prison walls, as weary as were we of the great waste when our food was low and our water bag empty, but I cannot yield to this demand of the legate. What know we of our emperor—save that he is a vain and foolish

man? Suppose it should be his purpose to try to exterminate the people of our faith—not an unlikely thing, I would say.”

In deep trouble I went to the legate and gave him the answer of Apollos and begged for easier terms. On my first visit he had been polite to me. Now he was stern and haughty.

“I think it better that we should make an example of this man who has been guilty of treason,” he said. “I give him three days in which to decide whether he will live or die. He shall be his own judge. Say to him that the people of your faith have now an opportunity to win the favor of Rome. The emperor has declared his wishes and the Jews of the Temple are raising a seditious clamor. The will of Cæsar must prevail and they shall be overcome by force of arms. Is it not the height of folly for your people to throw themselves into a quarrel of no importance to them? You do not worship in the Temple. Therefore why do you take offense because the emperor’s statue is to be set up in it?”

“O commander of the legions! the God of the Temple is our God,” I answered. “It is hateful to us that any man should seek to exalt himself to be the equal of the Most High. The throne of earth must not hope to rival the throne of Heaven.”

The commander laughed, exclaiming: “Stiff-necked fools! Little girl, what know you of the throne of Heaven? What do the wisest men know of the most high God?”

“Nothing save they have heard the words and seen the mighty deeds of His Son and Messenger as I have done,” was my answer.

Again he laughed and asked: "Do you say that you saw Him?"

"Three times I saw Him."

"Are you a Jew?"

"No, a Greek."

Now he stepped from his plinth of dignity and began to neigh in the fashion of all Roman gentlemen when alone with a young and attractive woman.

"You are a comely maid," he said. "I'll wager a thousand dinars that if some rich, handsome young man were to offer you his palace and ten thousand shekels a year you would soon forget your prophet and his religion and this babbling Jew, Apollos."

In astonishment I turned and looked up at him solemnly, and I remember well the words that came from my lips although I took no thought of what I should say.

Gently I spake: "Forget my Master and Apollos! O friend of Cæsar! Ask Vespasian, commander of the emperor's legion soon to arrive here, to tell you the kind of woman I am. Good sir, I have discovered a thing greater than all the treasure of this world."

"What is it?" he asked with a look of amusement.

"It is love," I answered. "My love of my Master and Apollos is as the blood in my veins. I could give up my life, but not that."

My answer had amazed him. Was he not the legate of Syria and I a Greek girl of no importance seeking a favor? Not before had he felt the power of that new thing which had lately come into the world.

"My pretty one, who are you? I judge that you have not riches," he said.

And I answered: "I have nothing but my faith and the clothes on my back and a horse and the garments in which I travel."

Thus he flattered me: "Your hair, your form, your face, your voice could make a fortune for you. Foolish maiden, you might wear the jewels and eat off the golden plates of Cæsar!"

I answered: "O voice of power! your words are to me like tasting a pod of green carob. If you knew of the things I have seen and heard you would understand me."

"You excite my curiosity," he said. "Some time when I have an hour of leisure I will hear you tell of them. I am a man of hard sense having known many women, and you must permit me to doubt your sincerity."

Too quickly I answered: "If you will let me tell you my memories you will neither doubt my sincerity or the truth that my King is greater than Cæsar."

He was irritated and the opportunity to be offended was one that he gladly seized.

"I am a patriot," he said; "no one in this province shall be permitted to say that there is a greater king than Cæsar. I demand that you retract the words."

He was a narrow-minded man of a rude temper, this Lentulus, then the legate of Syria. My sayings had been imprudent. They had brought me into needless trouble, but I must stand by them.

"I mean no disrespect to Cæsar, but never shall I retract those words, for they are true."

He summoned the three men who served as his bodyguard, saying: "You shall be cast into prison, there to remain until you are of a better mind."

Forthwith I was removed to a cell in the prison of the citadel. What a mystery! For a time it seemed as if my God had forsaken me. Yet now I see clearly the truth. I had spoken better than I knew. The one thing that the gentile world had to learn was this: the throne of Cæsar, giving and taking crowns of glory and holding the heart of man in awe, was but a child's toy compared to the throne of Heaven.

It was indeed a critical time for the rulers of Palestine. Simeon had told me of the mighty ferment which the mad design of Caligula had created. A band of pious men of the Temple had come to Antioch and warned Lentulus and Petronius that the emperor's plan was impossible.

These, their words, had been publicly repeated in the synagogues: "The Jewish people will rise, as one man, and die if need be before they will suffer any statue to be set up in the Temple, it being in their view an insult to their God. Before you reach the Holy Place your feet will be red with the blood of millions."

So the rulers stood between two perils—a mad emperor, who was threatening to cut off their heads if they did not obey him, and an angry, inappeasable race as stubborn as the walls of Gerizim. What were they to do? A long time I was held in prison before their course of thought was clear to me.

Meanwhile I was permitted to see Simeon but not Apollos. The Greek messenger from our unknown friend had returned to the house of the Jewish merchant. This time he had brought three bags of gold to help our work. Hundreds of tradesfolk and crafts-

men and two of wealth and position, one of them a priest, had joined our caravan.

One morning I was summoned to the cage to speak with Simeon. Eagerly, as always, I went to look into his friendly face and to hear the cheering news he was wont to give me, especially the good words he spoke of my boy. The sun shone warm. The autumn frosts had colored the foliage on the heights above us. It was a joy to breathe the fresh morning air and look up at the vines and trees. I had never seen the face of Simeon so serious. He gave a gold coin to the guard. The latter walked away out of hearing but still in sight.

Simeon began his message: "I have a heart of lead in me. The words I must speak will burn my lips. To-day you and Apollos are to go to our Master in paradise."

For a breath my heart failed me. My knees trembled. I grasped the bars to support myself. It was the human part of me, a strong part those days, which betrayed this weakness. Quickly my soul took command of me. A vision of the littleness of life and all its vanities had come. I was filled with a courage at which long since I have ceased to wonder. It comes, I think, of a sense of work well done, of having rounded the last cape. These were the words I spoke:

"I could weep for Apollos whose mighty strength is needed in these evil days, but I am happy to be going with him to paradise."

This the answer of Simeon: "They need human blood with which to overawe the Jews and to appease the impatient emperor. They think that it can come more safely from the veins of our despised people

than from those of the ancient faith of Israel. Shall I bring your little son to see you?"

"No, let him stay with his playthings. Tell him I have gone away on a journey and will not see him for a long time. I would not blast the heart of a child with such a memory."

In the third watch of the day I was taken to a sunlit vale near the palace of the legate. There were half a hundred soldiers in the vale and the slope leading down to it was thronged with the rich and fashionable folk of Antioch. I was led into a small enclosure in the midst of the soldiers fenced with ropes and stakes. A hateful and familiar odor came to my nostrils. It reminded me of the cave where Furoras and his Edomite slave had perished. It was the odor of lions. Looking about me I saw an iron-barred arena in which three huge lions were striding up and down looking out at the people. I knew then the kind of death chosen for us.

The vale had the shape of an amphitheater. An indented slope of ascending rock shelves climbed to the rear walls of the palace. Its stage was a level space with a background of willows that bordered a flowing stream. The natural terraces of lime rock, named in the old time, by Seleucus Nicator, the Giant's Stairway, were thronged with people and gay with many colors. Calmly I looked up at them. Yet how eagerly my eyes were searching. I wonder what they sought? Was it a friendly face or some sign of mercy? I know not. How little do I know of that strange companion—my inner self. Why should I have done up my hair so carefully? Why should I have asked Simeon to bring to me my best white robe with its

silken girdle of purple and gold? Why my blue kaf-fiyeh with its tiny, drooping, white, bell-like tassels to grace my brow and neck? Why my sandals of goat-skin, lashed with braided threads of purple silk? Could I not put aside my vanity even in the presence of death? My friends, therein is a mystery as you shall see.

Why when I had come to that dread place should I have observed the costumes from Italy and Gallia and Britannia and Egypt and Judea and Greece and Hispania and the strange wives of certain Romans from the north? It seemed as I looked that some one from every nation had come to see me die. There were priests, civil and army officers and rich merchants and their families.

All were chattering as they looked down upon me. Certain of the ladies were laughing gaily. I groaned at the sound of it, but why should I have cared? On the lower terrace, opposite the arena, and under a purple canopy, were Lentulus and Petronius. Those others who sat around them were no doubt their wives and children and friends. All had come to be entertained by my behavior in the presence of death and by the lion's method of attacking his prey. I remember that I had even a sense of pity for them. "They are indeed dwelling in darkness. They know not what they do," I said to myself. "In a few years when our spirit possesses the earth the heart of love shall be in the seats of the mighty."

In a little time Apollos was led to the enclosure and pushed in beside me. His hands were bound together on his back. I sought to embrace him but the guard thrust me aside.

"Is it for this that we came safely through the desert?" I whispered.

"Be of good cheer," he answered. "Those words are not new to you."

Who is this coming near? Hazar? Yes, it is Hazar, his head erect, his eyes as wide with astonishment as were my own. His face is changed. He smiles at me. Has he found his peace? He comes between two soldiers in the humble garb of a shepherd. He is put in beside us. We stand in the view of those above.

"His sins have cast him down," I said to myself as I looked upon him. "At last the Romans have caught Bardanes."

"Good master, know you what I have done to inherit eternal life?" he asked as his eyes met those of Apollos.

"I know," was the answer.

Near us was another enclosure with green branches woven into its cords and reaching upward so that we could not see who was concealed behind them.

The legate arose and addressed his friends, saying: "Citizens of Rome, officers, servants and beloved children of Cæsar, by whose command the peace and prosperity of the empire are secured, you are here to witness how heavily his displeasure falls upon them who oppose his will. First two thieves, each in his turn with the sword of a gladiator will enter the arena to fight the lions lately captured in the far desert. Next two members of that seditious, stubborn and troublesome sect which may be called Christians (it was the first time I had heard that word) will be asked to publicly renounce their faith and make sacrifice to the gods and swear allegiance to the emperor or suffer death.

"Lastly I give you a pleasure long desired by every honest citizen of this part of the empire. You shall see Bardanes, the bandit, known from Antioch to the southern desert, who for years has defied the law and its vigilant officers, meet the just punishment of his crimes."

The voices of those grand folk were lifted in loud cheers.

Now above the arena was a platform with ladders ascending to it. Through a narrow opening the condemned were lowered while guards thrust in their long spears to prevent the great beasts from leaping until the feet of their victim were on the ground. In a deep silence I watched this process of lowering the first thief until a kind of sickness came on me and I turned away. I heard the attack and the cry of him struck down and the shouts of the people. I think that the poor man must have died as quickly as did Furoras in the cave, for immediately a silence fell.

I kept my position and held my hands over my ears so that I saw and heard nothing of the next bloody scene. But this I saw: a crowd had gathered at the entrance to the vale. They were the small tradesfolk and craftsmen of the city. Among them were faces that I recognized.

A great tumult had arisen on the crowded stairway. I turned and uncovered my ears. The guests of the legate were shouting and cheering. I wondered why. Suddenly I thought no more of that for a singular event had caught my interest. A Roman guard close beside us was speaking with motionless lips in a low tone and a tongue unknown to me. He was looking up at the spectators and Hazar answered him in words

I knew not. There was something familiar in the look of the guard. Had I seen him before?

A crier shouted: "Bring out the Greek girl, Doris."

Now was I the one about to die. Two soldiers came to our enclosure and beckoned to me. I went out with a whispered prayer on my lips. I walked between them to the side of the arena wherein I saw much blood and the two men lying dead. They had suffered terrible mutilation. Rolled with hooked poles to an end of the enclosure they were lying against the bars. Men with long spears kept the lions from devouring them. All this I saw in a glance. Those still and silent forms lying in the bloody dust! How eloquently they speak to me even now of that world which knew not yet the love of men! I turned facing the legate. He arose and a deep silence fell when he said:

"Doris, in the name of Cæsar, I command you to declare that you will hereafter obey his laws and that forthwith you renounce forever the teaching of the false prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, and sacrifice to the gods. If you refuse to obey me I shall ask you to choose whether you will die by the lions or the sword."

Strength was given me and words with which to answer. What was death to me now?—a moment of pain, a little leap to paradise. And he was going with me. My eagerness to die well and be done with it, my faith, my pity and contempt for these people who could find amusement in my death had wrought in me a strange composure. I stood erect with a kind of pride in my soul. I remember that my voice had a sound new to me and reassuring when I lifted my hand and said:

"My Roman master! If through ignorance I have

disobeyed the laws I am sorry for it, and I seek your pardon. Knowingly I would violate no law of God or Cæsar. Unto each would I render the obedience which is their due. You demand of me that I renounce my faith. That, O mighty man! I could not do even if I were terrified by the death you will inflict upon me. To those of my faith it is both a solemn and a cheerful thing to come to the end of the road. You wonder at us. We follow One who was born as no man was born, who lived as no man has lived, who died as no man has died. We knew Him. Can you not believe, sir, that some mighty thing came out of Him into us to abide there and stay our souls in the shadow of that which all others dread? What is it which causes me to stand here calmly, and deliberately to tell you that my love of my Master in Heaven is greater than my fear of your sword and these frightful beasts? Moreover I shall die praying for your forgiveness. You, sir, and all who hear my voice, will soon pass the dark valley I now enter. Before then may you have the knowledge that is mine so that you may die as I do."

Something in the sound of my words had held their interest. In a deep silence my voice had risen. The silence continued for a little time while I stood waiting. Then the query of Lentulus with a milder note in it:

"Will you die by the beasts or the sword?"

"By the sword, if you please, O friend of Cæsar!"

I heard him summon the executioner. The guards took off my headdress and cloak. Then it was that I saw my little son come running toward me in a dress like that of a centurion, his toy sword at his side, his curly, blonde hair waving in the breeze. A soldier pursued him until he was near me. The spectators

began cheering the boy who had won the race. The soldier stopped.

My son had come out of that crowd beyond the entrance to the vale where men and women stood as thick as tangled thorns. How had he got by the guards? Well, strangely it happened that one of them was a convert to our faith, the other an unsuspected friend. Only a fleet-footed child could have done the thing he did. Simeon, I have since learned, had taught him what to do and say. In his excitement the boy had forgotten his part. He clasped my knees and stood looking up at me and repeating the tender word so often on his lips, with tears flowing. He knew not the meaning of all this; but he felt the trembling of my bones and flesh, he saw a strange look in my face. He knew that I was in great trouble. The guards let me kneel and embrace him. Quickly I calmed his emotion. Then, remembering, he turned toward the legate and amazed him and his friends with this plea:

"O heart of Cæsar! My father is a great Roman general. Let me have my mother."

I was looking up at Lentulus when I saw Vespasian, my old-time lover, come out of the group behind him and address the legate standing at his side. He must have arrived while these festivities were proceeding. Quickly Lentulus called to his guards: "Bring hither the young woman and her son."

As we went I heard the crowd at the entrance to the vale singing:

Thou hast shown us the light of thy countenance
 Beautiful as the morning scattered on the mountains,
 Like the dew unto Israel is thy face, O Lord!
 And thy voice like the pipe of the shepherd among the green
 hills.

A guard lifted the boy in his arms and Vespasian, reaching down from the edge of the shelf on which he stood, took him in his arms and kissed and embraced him, saying: "My little centurion!"

He released the boy and turned to me and put his hands upon my shoulders and looked into my eyes.

"My Lady Doris!" he exclaimed. "How comes it that you grow younger and more beautiful as the years pass?"

He kissed my cheek as I answered: "Commander of the legions! if it be true it is because I have been born again."

"Stronger than an army with spears and banners were the look of you and my little soldier," he answered. "I could not have seen you die. I shall try to make terms with the legate for your forgiveness."

Then was I sorely troubled. I spake out: "O friend of Cæsar, I pray you let me die with him I love."

He turned to me with a look of amazement, asking: "Is it the same old lover?"

"The same," I answered. "We have been through many trials and not until this day have I been able to so much as touch his robe."

He smiled, saying: "In all my travels I have seen no human being like you."

He turned to Lentulus and the two conferred together while impatient words arose in the seats above because of this delay in the proceedings. Then the voice of the legate saying:

"The Greek girl Doris and Apollos, the Jewish teacher, are reprieved for further consideration of their offenses and of their disposition to submit to the will of Cæsar."

At this point he was interrupted by cheers. The plea of my little son had impressed the rich folk of the city.

Lentulus commanded that Bardanes be brought forth.

The guards led him out and while they were taking off his coat a thing came to pass like the magic of some great sorcerer. A man in the dress of a wealthy Roman merchant descended from a seat behind the enclosure of Lentulus. He walked swiftly, passing the Roman guard, and standing between the man about to die and the legate, facing the latter, loudly spake these words:

"O friend of Cæsar! This is not Bardanes. Before you commit an error which would cause you much trouble I beg you to stop this execution. I have information to give you."

Immediately I had recognized the voice and now the face of the merry Greek who had brought sacks of gold to the house of Simeon and whom I had first seen when he stopped me on the Roman highway and gave me three drachmæ with playful words.

"What have you to say?" the legate demanded.

The Greek pointed at Hazar, who, stripped to the waist, now stood behind him between two guards, and said:

"This man is an impostor. He is not Bardanes, the bandit, whose name is the terror of the East."

"How know you that?" was the query of Lentulus.

"There are many who know and I best of all, sir, that *I* am no other than Bardanes. Know you I am jealous of my fame. It is a unique honor to be able to rob Jews and Romans and enjoy years of security

and happiness. I am aware that my competition has annoyed you. That has not surprised me. This man has no right to seize the credit which is my due. He is nothing but an honest, hard-working fellow—once my servant. He has become a religious man. Why, he even fears and respects your laws. Could any one sink lower?"

Shouts of anger arose in the towering seats as the subtle import of his words began to penetrate. The man stripped off his dress and stood with bare breast, on which a spread-winged eagle had been tattooed in the flesh. Voices demanded that he be thrown to the lions.

He danced gaily before them, his face as happy as when he came to Simeon's gate. He laughed.

"That is what I think of your lions," he shouted. Then to the legate, who was conferring with Vespasian and Petronius, he said:

"There are four men in this city who have contributed to my wealth and who owe their lives to my mercy. By them I will prove my claim. You poor lice of Rome, I have more than twenty thousand talents in gold, lying in your banks and hidden in the hills of Syria."

The legate turned to my friend Hazar still standing by the arena and demanded:

"Is it true that this impudent fellow is the bandit Bardanes?"

"I am sworn never to tell who is Bardanes," Hazar answered.

Then said Lentulus: "He shall have the punishment he deserves. Let him be taken to the citadel with his fellow and there be confined until we learn which

is the bandit Bardanes and what he has done with his hidden wealth."

"Ha, ha!" the strange man shouted back before the soldiers could seize and silence him. "I knew that you would not miss your chance to rob the robber."

The people arose from their seats in a tumult of protest. This holiday of Antioch had ended. The evening shadows had begun to fall.

Vespasian said to me: "I will send a litter and a guard with you to the home of your friends. I have promised that you will leave Syria to-morrow. I will take Apollos to Rome with me to be judged by Cæsar. I learn that he is a Roman citizen. Therefore it is his right. I will try to make it easy for him. It is the best that I can do. I will come early to-morrow to do what I may to serve you and to talk with you about the boy."

The soldiers and their prisoners and the people at the gates had gone. The lingering guests of Lentulus were now on the upper steps of the Giant's Stairway. We began our climb, the boy clinging on the back of his father.

When we had reached the top I heard a loud cry rising from a point at least a furlong from where we stood. It carried the Arab word "Sulemat." Another voice at a greater distance took up the cry and tossed the message to waiting ears still more remote until I doubt not it had swept to the far limits of the city. I thought it a custom of Antioch as did Vespasian, doubtless, for neither of us spoke of the matter.

We rode in the general's litter to the house of Simeon with a soldier marching on either side of us, spears at rest, and one before bearing the golden eagle

on a staff. I had protested that an escort was not necessary.

"I will have my way," said the great Roman; "my little centurion is entitled to this honor."

The lad watched our escort proudly. He wished to know all about their boots and coats and spears and the golden eagle and Rome and Cæsar. He had slight knowledge of the great thing he had accomplished.

The Syrian maid admitted us.

"I could believe that I am after all in paradise," I said as I stretched out on a cushioned couch, "but only for a breath or two. Apollos is further from me now than ever he has been. I could almost wish that we had crossed the valley together."

Simeon came soon with surprising news. Hundreds of mounted bowmen scattered through the city had gathered quickly from all sides on hearing the shouted signal and attacked and overwhelmed the soldiers on their way to the citadel with their prisoners. A number on both sides had been slain. The captive Greek, then a member of the legion of Petronius, had mounted a horse and escaped from the city with a great company of his friends. Hazar had been offered a horse but had declined to go with them.

CHAPTER XVI

A NEW TEMPTATION AND THE FIRST OF MANY JOURNEYS

I HAD found a letter awaiting me in the house of my friend. It was from my beloved Miriam. She and Nehemiah had suffered furious persecution. Their lives had been in danger. They had sold their land and gone to Colossæ, a city on the Lycus in Phrygia of Asia Minor. There dwelt a brother of Nehemiah, a prosperous man of the name of Philemon. Near there they had bought a vineyard. Bar-timæus and his daughter were soon to join them, traveling overland through Syria.

So when Vespasian came to see me I was in doubt as to whether I should go to Rome with my lover or to Colossæ to join my friends. My hope was strong that he would take me to Rome with my beloved one.

"To Rome?—no," said the young general in answer to my appeal. "What would you do in Rome?"

"Perchance I could help Apollos."

"You would ruin him. Cæsar knows and admires you. He met you in the palace of Caius Varus. He knew that you had lived with me. I never see him that he does not wound me with some ribald jest about you. We who know him have to step carefully."

"Could I not live among the common people and tell them my stories of the great Messiah?"

He laughed, exclaiming: "Oh, what an innocent, little, back-country maiden you are! What do they know or care in Rome about your Messiah? They would laugh at you. They would think you were mad. Rome is very busy. The mighty jostle against the mighty and find their days too short for the affairs of this world. They do not concern themselves with those of eternity. Jewish notions and Jewish beards are the material of our best jokes. My Lady Doris, keep away from Rome at least until your mental disorder is cured."

"If you knew the things that I know, you would understand my faith," I answered.

"I admire the courage it gives you, but I think it a kind of madness."

"If it be madness to have peace in the midst of great trouble and to forgive those who wrong you and to be true to those who love you against all temptation, the sooner the whole world is mad the better."

He tried to take my hand in his but I drew away from him.

This temptation that he set before me was, I am sure, no playful jest: "It is a dream as beautiful as you, my lady. I know this world. You seek to turn the desert into a fruitful field while you try to satisfy its thirst with a watering pot. If you had wealth and power, if the lawmakers and the legions of Rome were also to catch your madness much could be done. My fair one, I swear by the mother of the Æneadæ, darling of men and gods, that my love for you is greater than ever it was. I will buy you a palace in Italy and give you a handsome income and what help I can. Some time, perchance, I could make you

my wife. I am getting along. The legions are behind me. My ambitions are well founded. If we could set the world to dreaming and build temples to your god and hire poets to recommend him, then should we make him as popular as Jupiter in early Rome."

I laughed and I am sure that there was a note of indignation in the sound of it.

"You do know the world," I answered, "and how perfectly you speak for it, but how little you know of me. The thing you propose would be like watering the desert with the brine of the sea. Not all the armies of Cæsar could make a rushlight in the darkness. Only the soul of Cæsar, filled with the spirit from above, could help in my task. Vespasian, I know you well. You are like all the great men of our time. Your proposal grieves me but I would be kind in my answer. The things that you enjoy are not for me. Mine is another kind of armor. Its shield is faith, its weapons are love and patience and charity and loyalty and the capacity to suffer. I have charity for you. I speak no harsh word. But if I threw away these weapons I should be helpless to do my work even if I had the wealth and power of Cæsar. God help you to understand me."

He rose from the seat at my side and looked down upon me with an expression of amusement and curiosity.

"The deep mind of Juno would be easier to understand," he said. "One thing I ask. Let me take the boy and put him in a school in Rome. Later I would like to have him with me on a campaign and train him to be a soldier."

This I had feared. In that matter I dared not now to oppose his will. Yet I said:

"He is my son and I had hoped to bring him up in my faith to fight with my weapons."

He is my son and I have a right to do what I can for him. The lad is like me, a born soldier, and it is now in my power to help him. He will still be your boy. When he is a little older he can come to visit you. Better than your right arm would be a son in the legions."

"If I yield to your wishes will you do what you can for Apollos?"

"I will, but I must wait upon a favorable mood in Cæsar. I shall fill his ears with lies. I shall tell him that all the Jews in Syria are clamoring for the release of your friend. He may wish to please them and me."

I answered: "The boy is dear to me, but I am driven hither and thither like a chip in the sea. I have no home for him. I am in the midst of perils. I shall let you have the boy."

"Where will you go?"

"To Colossæ in Phrygia. I have friends who live there."

"So have I—a Roman of wealth and of a character as mild and estimable as that of a pet lamb. He would like your philosophy. I shall commend you to him."

My courage and my devotion to my faith were things beyond his understanding but they had won his respect. He gave me a well-filled purse and letters to the army-camp commanders in the north requesting that an escort be sent with me over lonely

stretches of the highway. I thanked him and made my last request. It was for a parting word with Apollos.

"I advise against it," was his answer. "We must not go too far. Lentulus has been irritated by the escape of the bandit Bardanes and the loss of some of his best men. Within an hour I wish you to be out of this city and on your way north. And when you are started, keep going. Apollos will know where you are and shall have money to take him to Colossæ when he is free. The boy will stay here with your friend until I am ready to return to Rome."

"I would have you tell Lentulus that the man Hazar has given everything in his possession to the poor of Antioch," I said. "Moreover, he can tell you a pretty tale, for he was a friend of Tiberius Cæsar."

"A friend of Tiberius Cæsar!" he exclaimed.

"No less, and if any man ever deserved mercy it is he," I assured him.

"Before the day ends I shall have a talk with Hazar."

He kissed my cheek, saying: "My lady of the strange mind, farewell. If there be any gods in the sky, may they love you as I do."

He left me and I prepared for my journey. First I went into the garden where my son was playing with other children. I called him aside. Impatiently he came to me. I leaned over and kissed him and he ran back to his mates. A moment I watched them marching down the long path with toy spears at rest and trumpets blowing as the legion was wont to march in the streets. He was one of the unconquerable Romans. I saw him not again until, a sturdy,

full-grown soldier and captain of his company, he had returned from a bloody campaign in Germania.

My beloved maid and Simeon gave me their blessing at the gate and I set out upon my journey. My white horse, Westwind, came from the stables eager for travel. He loved the road and was impatient to be out of the crowded streets. The high gardens, the wrought columns, the statues, the fountains, the vista of the Corso leading my eyes to the sunlit, shadowy steep of Mount Silpius were fair to look upon. I had read of the lofty gardens and the thousand towers of Babylon but I am sure that the splendors of Antioch were not less grateful to the eye. I was sorry to be leaving the city which for sheer beauty and wickedness was the chief rival of Rome. It was in sore need of instruction and we were not for the righteous but for the wicked.

A long time I was detained by a procession in honor of the arrival of Vespasian and his legion. One feature of it was a company of beautiful maidens wearing only a blue fillet around their waists. They were followed by a score of naked courtesans borne in basins of limpid water. The sight had been like smoke in my eyes. These were the attractions of Antioch which were paraded before the young Roman general and his staff. Here was the blackest part of that darkness in the midst of which I and my friends had been holding our lanterns.

I had not reached the north gate when I met Bar-timæus and his daughter entering the city. They were riding on asses.

They greeted me fondly and with great joy.

"Whither go you?" the man asked.

"To Colossæ."

"So are we bound. We shall turn and go with you."

Their company would have been a joy to me, but I urged them to tarry in Antioch and go to the house of Simeon and tell him and others of our Master and His mercy. Often I had told of his great adventure by the wayside and well I knew how eagerly those of our faith would welcome and hear him.

So it came to pass that I went on my way alone—yet not alone. I who had gone with Saul to Damascus had little need of visible companions. True, I saw Him not; but why should I, who had the eyes and the ear of faith, behold Him as had Saul of Tarsus? Often when my soul was down in the dust the words came to me, "Be of good cheer," and I was lifted up.

A mounted courier, riding fast with dispatches to Rome, had gone ahead of me. At every post and camp I found a welcome. An escort went with me through the eastern mountain region and up through the central table lands, traversed by barbarous tribes not yet quite subdued, where many robberies had occurred. If I had been a noble lady of the house of Cæsar I could have had no greater consideration from the Roman officers. I began to know what a power in the army was the young Vespasian. The thought came to me that some time our little jest before the camp at Sela would come true and that he would be Cæsar.

Over the high, barren plateaus on the ancient trade route to the sea I journeyed. Down by the marble quarries I fared, and on through the green vales where were fertile vineyards and many flocks feeding in a land famed for its fine wool.

In no town or city did our secret word bring any sign of understanding. At last worn with travel, I arrived in the ancient and beautiful city of Colossæ, which has ever since been my home. The autumn had come and I went to work in the vineyard of Miriam and Nehemiah. Every night an increasing number of their friends sat around me on the rugs in their house while I told my stories. In time people came from Laodicæa and far villages to hear me. Thus the light began to shine in the darkness of Asia Minor and for many the cloud of mystery, in which the truth had been hid for ages, was cleared away.

CHAPTER XVII

TO THE CITY OF ROMANCE WITH STRANGE COMPANIONS

I HAVE found that speaking to many people is like casting a net in the sea. Sometimes the catch has little value and sometimes it almost fills the hold of the ship. Therein is a truth that gave me the zeal of the son of Nimshi. It kept my heart young and out of the shadow of despair.

Those first years of mine in Colossæ were as full as the Jordan when the melted snows come down from the heights above it. The wealthy Roman to whom Vespasian had commended me accepted our faith. In his house I had my part in many a symposium wherein the letters and orations of Cicero were read and declaimed.

I said: "They speak to me of the infinite value and dignity that a human soul can achieve. I think that they must have convinced God, as had the writings of Hillel and Gamaliel in Judea, that the time was come to make the world a cleaner place to live in."

Then said the Roman: "It would seem that He should have been convinced of that long ago. The voices of Plato and Socrates and Demosthenes must also have reached His ear."

"But in their time the cost of breaking the chains of bondage would have been too great. Man-made divinities ruled the world. No one was strong enough

to live if he spoke a word against them. Now the gods are only a list of names. They have been tried and found wanting. The men of power have no respect for them. What has the Lord sought to show us with those poor fishermen from the Lake of Galilee and with many others but the infinite value and dignity that may dwell in a man—that great gifts may come to the humblest of us?”

There were those in the hearing of my voice—a slave, a weaver, a dyer of wool—who were to receive and bless the Gentile world with the gifts of which I had spoken. The names of these or that of my Roman friend I dare not give, for they are now in prison.

Caligula was slain by the contrivance of that Cassius Cheria of whom I have told. Claudius sat upon his throne. I was ever looking for Apollos. My eyes failed with longing but he came not. Again and again I wrote to Vespasian, and, on a day some years after he left me in Antioch, I received an answer to all my anxious queries. It was like a spring in the desert. It revived my fainting spirit with these words:

MY LADY DORIS: I have not forgotten my promises. I have done everything that could be expected of me and more for your lover. I have even begun to like him. He is a remarkable man and has been of some slight service to me—the value of which I shall later be better able to estimate—in saving my life from the hand of an assassin. I got for him a comfortable degree of liberty until he could be taken before the emperor for judgment. He was allowed to go about the city chained to a soldier of my command. More than a dozen of my men have thus served him and shared his bread and counsel and even his madness. They have become his friends and taken to dreaming and talking of things to come. I have regarded it as an amusing and harmless matter.

The man is without fear and he has a mighty gift—like your own, insomuch that I have not ventured often to speak with him for fear of getting the mental contagion which has spread through Palestine. He has told me that he loves me and, by Jupiter, if it were safe to do so, I could love him, since he was willing to give up his life for me. Therein is the reason for the delay.

As you will believe, our Caius Cæsar was a busy emperor. I could prove that on the testimony of a hundred ladies. The poor man had little time for official duties. That was fortunate. The matter drifted along. I did not press it upon his attention, knowing the danger of that. Then the unexpected tragedy. Now I see a prospect of your friend's early release. I shall send him to Thessalonica and Apollonius and Troas. In the latter city is a friend of mine who will give him help. I do not send him to nearer ports for a sufficient reason.

Julian is in excellent health and spirits. He is an apt student and no boy near his age in the school is his rival as an athlete. I shall be going north in the autumn to command the legions in Gaul and Germania and shall take him with me. When he returns he may go to you for a visit. Often he speaks of his mother. With affectionate regards, I sign myself

Your devoted friend,

VESPASIAN.

Now I had many friends in the north, some of them even in the remote cities of Ramlah, Smyrna and Ephesus. They were mostly merchants who had come to Colossæ to buy wool and dyed garments and herbs and fruits. I had now achieved some fame as "The Story-Teller of Colossæ," and many travelers from afar came to hear me. That month I received a letter from Cæsarea to which I am much indebted. For a little time it mystified me. It was in unfamiliar script. The signature set me groping in my memories until I was aware of the truth. Those were trying days and the letter was like many passing between people of our

faith. This is the message on the little sheet of vellum which I have kept:

MY BELOVED LADY: I learn from Rome where you are living. Your friend and mine will soon be arriving in Troas. I advise you to go north and meet him there and tell him to leave that city at once and, if possible, without letting himself be known. Tell him that the governor of the province was his bitter enemy in Cæsarea and would be pleased to take his life. A man who knows the wild country east of that place will probably meet you on the road and give you what help he can. I am married—as I hope you will be with no unnecessary delay—and I have two children. My life and liberty have become important to myself, to you and to many others. Therefore I sign myself

A FRIEND.

I knew soon that the letter was from Hazar, who had been often in my thoughts but of whom no word had reached me since that bloody and fateful day in the little amphitheater of Lentulus.

So it came to pass that I left my anxious friends in Colossæ and set out alone, against their advice, on the long and difficult journey to the City of Romance. No thought of peril could have detained me. Those who have loved as I loved will know the urge in my soul to see the last milestone of that journey. My horse was in fine condition and the first day I put twenty leagues behind me. If Apollos were detained I planned to await his coming in Troas and to say not a word of my purpose. With the letter from Vespasian in my bag I was sure of the help and hospitality of the soldiers.

I was twenty-seven years of age—as light of foot and as young in spirit as ever I had been—when I set

out upon this journey. I found a ready welcome with husbandmen in the green valleys, cut by the tributaries of the straying Mæander, until I reached the high, lonely lands. There I could find food and shelter only in the posts.

I was hastening through a part of this barren wilderness near the end of a summer day, eager to reach the next stopping place, when suddenly I discovered a horseman in the road, not fifty cubits ahead of me. It seemed as if he had risen out of the ground. He stood directly in my path. He was singing a merry lay of wine and fair ladies in the Arab tongue. He bowed with a grand gesture as I came near, saying:

"Brave daughter of Hellas! When Greek meets Greek in a far country it is a time for singing. For an hour I have been watching you."

"Bardanes—the friend of Hazar!" I exclaimed in astonishment.

"Bardanes! You do me honor. Fair lady, of myself I know nothing save this that I am a terror to evildoers and at your service. Rome would give ten thousand drachmæ for my head and yet I would give it to you for a smile and a kind word. Whither go you I know well."

"Whither?" I asked.

"To the city of Priam on the blue sea to meet Apollos. Hazar has news from Rome. Your lover will be coming soon. I shall take him and you through the Trail of Mystery so that you will not be in danger from tribesmen or Romans. My duty does not end until you are married. Then I shall get my reward."

"What has happened to Hazar and where is he?" I asked.

"He escaped death on the plea of Vespasian, backed by that of a man of even greater power and a petition signed by five thousand men and women of Antioch who had received his bounty. Hazar has the power of divination. He told the young general that he would be Emperor of Rome. That was a word in season. After a year in prison Hazar was banished to Judea. I would have preferred death. He did not. He has taken the downward way. I have tried in vain to save him."

"What do you mean?"

"He is drunk with religion. He has squandered his savings. The poisoned arrow of a new god has touched his heart. You led him astray in the skies. He will not come down. The man is beyond hope."

"Was it not his squandering that helped to save his life?" I asked.

"Would you also lead me astray? Would you make me a long-faced, pious, truth-telling slave of your god—I who enjoy the freedom of the wild ass? Have I not seen what comes of it? I will not be the food of lions. Not that I am too good for such a fate, but I have a great respect for lions. Hazar is fattening himself for the beasts of the arena. He was once the friend of kings—the greatest and the richest bandit in the world—dreaded not less than Cæsar. What is he now?—a prosperous and respected merchant in Cæsarea. By the right hand of Jove! I call that a fall."

"But he is now an honest man," I said.

"He was that always, my lady. His word was never broken."

"But he has saved his soul," I urged.

The merry Greek laughed at me, saying: "He would better have saved his money and his reputation. He was sure of them. What eye has ever seen the soul of a man? It would not fill the hollow of my sling."

"It is a thing to be felt—not seen," I answered. "Have you prospered?"

"Alas! None too well. The good old days are gone. The Roman soldiers wish to do all the robbing. The caravans pay them for protection. The poor, honest, hard-working bandit has to fight for his daily bread."

"You seem to be well fed."

"I am big," he said with a gesture of both hands as he surveyed himself, "but I have the heart of a little bird in me."

He smote upon his breast and sang another verse of his Arab love song.

"I am a brother to the wind and the roe and the wild ox," he went on. "I sleep in dens and caves and under the leafy homes of the birds. I have played with the children of the leopard. Come with me to my camp, O daughter of the blessed land! My bowmen have heard how you dared the Romans at Antioch. They will bow their heads to the ground when they see you."

I sat on my horse looking into his face. I had some fear of the mysterious man. Yet I felt sure that he would do me no harm. The sun was low. I could see only the great barren plain with its scattered sage no higher than one's knees. Whither would he take me? He seemed to read my thoughts.

"If you fear me go on to the Roman post," he said.

"You may still reach it before the night falls. I only wish to help you and to take you on a way which would save you many miles of travel. Are you not a friend of Bardanes?"

"I trust you and I will go with you," I said. "I know that you wish to help me and you shall find that I am not ungrateful."

Those who have heard the inspired tongue of Paul or read his letters will know what strange companions we who traveled were wont to have. We did not forget the forgiven thief.

At a swift gallop we set out from the highway. An hour after darkness fell we descended a fertile slope on which many cattle were grazing. In the starlight we could see them scattered far as thick as the herds of Jacob. On a broad terrace well down the slope we came to a grove. At the edge of it the horses stopped. A stranger stood by their heads. We dismounted, leaving the horses with him, and I followed through the black darkness under the tree-tops. Suddenly I was aware that we were in the midst of the robber band.

In a low tone my companion spoke: "Well, men, what has happened?"

A man's voice answered in Aramaic: "The Ravens from the north are with us, camped in the deep gorge below."

"Then must we move on or prepare for a fight with them at daybreak," said the merry Greek. "First bring us bread, meat and water. We have fasted since midday and my brain is as jaded as my horse."

We ate in silence and soon the Greek asked:

"Have they seen any of our band?"

"No; our men and horses were covered by this wood when we saw them pass at sundown. No doubt they were in need of water for they lost no time in going down to the springs to camp. I think that they are all asleep by now."

Food and drink were put in our hands and while we partook of it my companion told me that the Ravens were a savage wandering tribe from the north who raided the fertile lands to steal cattle.

The Greek laughed under his breath as he said: "There is no business so disreputable as thieving, to my mind, unless I am doing it. How much happier the world would be with only one bandit! I consider it my duty to the people I rob to protect them from all other thieves."

We had not finished our repast when he spoke the word "Rimlah." It was repeated many times in a whisper the sound of which receded in the distance until I could hear it no more. Then the sound of footsteps stealthily approaching us in the darkness—those of the man Rimlah, the under chief of the band.

The Greek, of whose name I have no knowledge even now, gave this command: "Set five of our men a-gathering fagots and dipping them in oil. You and the rest mount your horses and quietly assemble a goodly number of cattle near the head of the gorge. Make no noise in doing it. The bellowing will not matter, but let no man's voice be heard. A few bundles of corn will help to hold them. Line your men on both sides of the path leading into the gorge. Then go among the cattle and tie the fagots to as many tails as you can. I shall tell you what more to do."

"It is a good device," said Rimlah who immediately left us.

I heard whispers and the moving of many men.

"Come with me and you shall see a thing to remember," were the words of my strange companion. "Those low-born thieves from the north are camped in a narrow alley between rock walls. They chose it because it is a place easily guarded. The cattle shall have their revenge."

I followed him out of the grove. We stood under the stars watching while the men were at work and hearing the tramp of many hoofs. The chief bade me wait while he went for his horse and mine. When he returned we could dimly see the cattle gathering in a great mass at least a furlong from where we stood.

We mounted and rode toward them. The herd were crowding around the stalks of corn, well scattered across the field. Many men on horses were busy tying the fagot bundles to the tails of those in reach. Soon seventy torches were aglow behind the herd and in two lines on either side of it narrowing toward the head of the trail leading downward into the pass. A score of men with flaming torches ran around the feeding beasts lighting the dipped fagots.

The wild deviltry that followed shook my heart with terror. There were demon yells and waving torches and a whirling, roaring mass of flame-stung beasts. The latter surged sidewise, like billows in a tempest, hitting the shoals and rocking backward. For a little time it seemed as if they would break the walls of men. Some bellowing, wide-horned bulls, with flaming tails extended, rushed toward the trail, that

being the way of no resistance, and the stampede began. More than a hundred beasts were galloping in that direction, each with a stream of flame behind him, the men closing in as they passed and urging them on. The beating of their hoofs shook the earth. They dipped over the edge and went thundering down the pass toward the unsuspecting sleepers below.

A guard was put around our camp in the wood. I lay down on my rug in the midst of men who were engaged in a perpetual war with the rest of mankind. Yet this was true of them: they would risk their lives for friendship and gratitude. The merry Greek was like Cæsar who had respect only for the lives and property of himself and his favorites.

I slept little and we were up and traveling on our way before the sun rose. That day we captured two wandering men of the tribe of the Ravens. They told us how the herd had come upon them, trampling down many and injuring others and scattering their horses far and wide. The chief and his men were of mind to put the fugitives to death, but I prevailed upon them to think better of it.

Then said the chief: "They would be worth a hundred denarii each as slaves in any city, but I cannot go to the markets with such truck, and I have all the men I can feed these days."

"Give them my food, for this day I am fasting, and let them go," I urged. "Some day you may be in need of mercy. This I have learned and you will learn it—we reap as we sow."

"And I am sowing thistles when I let them go, but you shall be obeyed," was the chief's answer.

The captives were given food and water and set free.

Many of our band shouted jibes at them as they went away.

Day after day we journeyed through the lonely lands, keeping far from the Roman highway. When we camped at night the men gathered about me and listened to my stories. Then was I like one showing wonders and they like children who watch the deeds of a great magician. To them I was as one from another world. They feared me—feared even to question me of the things of which I had told them. In time their awe would have passed. Then I doubt not I could have given of my own abundance to those who hungered.

This is a strange thing: the chief stole away when I began talking. He knew what I had accomplished with Hazar and he feared me more than did any of those lean, swarthy men who followed him. I think that he warned his band of my sorcery for on the night I told of the healing of Marsitas and Bartimæus others stole away out of hearing.

While he regarded me as a dangerous bit of merchandise to be safely delivered in Troas, the merry Greek kept his good nature and his light heart. A day's journey from our destination he left his band and took me over the terraces into the City of Romance.

As we were riding together along the coast and smelling the breath of the sea, thus spake the chief:

"Listen, my child, I will tell you a story as hard to believe as any you have told. Albeit I know the people in the tale and have seen it happen, still I could almost think myself a liar when I tell it. But it is as

true as any of our knowledge, for I am sure that the life we live and the things we see and touch and hear are only a dream of the night. I am sad to be telling of that which has robbed me of a merry heart and great prosperity.

"Now this is what befell. Ten years ago we captured the richest man in Mysia. His name was Saramalla—a son of the wealthy Saramalla of the time of Herod the Great. His ransom brought us a goodly sum—no less than ten talents. It was safely hidden in the hills. One day the chief took me with him to get the money. We loaded it on a camel's back and set out I knew not whither and dared not ask him. After many days we arrived at Troas by the Trail of Mystery which you have traveled. We went straight to the palace of Saramalla and gave back to him the money we had taken. I tell the truth although I expect no one to believe it, and these were the words of the great Bardanes as he stood before the little rich man. As with a branding iron they were burned in my memory:

" 'I desire to make my peace with God and in His name I give back to you the money I have taken while it is in my power. I ask only in return that you will forgive me.'

"The stern, proud chief knelt before that little perfumed, ladies' pet, to whom the money was no more than the ring on his finger, and begged, like a ragged, blind man in the street, to be forgiven. By Saturn, I never saw an act so strange and pitiful. It was an ill happening."

"Did Saramalla forgive him?" I asked.

"In truth he did, but he would have it that I should

be turned over to the Romans for punishment. Thus spake the great Bardanes: 'No, if my friend must die I will die with him,' and the man forgave us both. Always I have loved Bardanes, but now I fear him as never before."

"Why?" was my query.

"With this new god in his heart he cares not for the good things of this world. Money, wine and women and merry songs are as chaff in the wind. To what new madness he may turn, who can tell? He is on the downward path."

"Why should that worry you?"

"He is my master and he is twenty cubits tall. I am clay in his hands and his arms are as long as the emperor's."

I wondered at his meaning until he added: "I am always at his mercy. I fear not Rome but I fear Bardanes. If this day in far Cæsarea he were to whisper 'Come,' I would hear his whisper and go. I could tell you of many like mysteries. I have grown weary of my work because often I hear his voice staying my hand. I am a slave. I live and wander only for the reason that he suffers me to do so."

It was the first and the last time that the cynical Greek showed his heart to me. I saw that his love was largely inspired by fear and that not even the strange power of Bardanes could open that door in the heart of the Greek for which every man must find his own key.

The shadows of the evening had fallen. The stars were shining in the east. We stopped for a little time to look up at the great temple of Athena, built by Augustus. This was Ilios where once had stood the

upreaching towers. Often I had read the story since Apollos poured it in my ears while the flocks were feeding. I was disappointed. The grandeur of the ancient time was gone. We were in a city shrunken with age, of mean streets and small houses.

I went to a bazaar and bought much finery and filled my little silver bottle with new musk. I had not lost my eye for comeliness. Not ever since my faith were well established have I thought it a sinful thing to make the real gifts of God as pleasing as my purse would let me. The merchant directed us to the palace of Saramalla. It stood in a great garden near the edge of the upper terrace. It was of white marble, one story in height, with wings radiating from the central structure. A slave at the gate took my bundles. His master was looking for me. My guide said that he would await my wishes at the caravansary by the south gate.

Saramalla met me in the atrium of his palace. On pedestals along its walls were beautiful vases and statues. My host was a little man with a large head, bearded and full-haired and blanced by age.

"Lady of the stout heart!" he exclaimed, as he took my hand in his, "I have seen you before."

"Where?"

"In Antioch the day that my young friend Vespasian kept the sword dry that was to take your life. It was a goodly thing to see. Hazar has written of your coming."

"It is a wonder that he lives."

There was a twinkle in the keen, black eyes of the little man under their silvered tufts as he answered:

"Well, my hand was in that matter. Hazar is a

good man and the Romans have some reason to respect me."

He turned and pulled a silver cord and a maid with belled ankles came and he said:

"A bath and a change of clothing will ease your weariness. When you are thus refreshed we will sup with my daughters."

I was taken to a spacious room and bathed and rubbed with ointment. The maid led me in my new robe and tunic and slippers to the triclinium where my host and his two daughters were awaiting me. The latter were women of about thirty years and a playful spirit.

"I hear that you are expecting to be married," said one of them. "I wish that we were so fortunate."

"Are you not married?" I asked.

"We have a place of honor among the interesting relics in our father's museum. We are wont to speak of ourselves as: 'The Saramalla Twins, once too good now too old to be married.' You see our father never could find a man who was worthy of us. It is safer to be the son of a philosopher than his daughter."

With good nature their father spoke: "In Troas there is no man of our rank to marry them. I have seen how women fare among the curled darlings of Athens, Rome and Antioch. There is no rich man's son that has anything to do but sleep through the day and spend the night in wild revels. The only decent men are in the army, and they cannot live with their wives. It is ill luck to be a woman these days. Be content with a good father."

They went and kissed his forehead and came to my

couch and felt my hair and examined my garments and said: "You are like the chaste maiden of Praxiteles."

"We shall compare them to-morrow," said their father. "Her form is surely excellent."

The daughters sat beside me as we ate. One of them amused me when she whispered in my ear: "He is the best of men but there are days when even a goat herdsman looks like Apollo."

Said the other: "We live with many statues by certain masters of old Hellas. They are beautiful but very cold."

"What think you of Troas?" the old gentleman asked.

"It disappoints me," I answered.

"Aye, it is like a limping, old soldier worn by many wars whose glory is buried in the past even beyond the reach of his own memory. Listen to the whispering dust beneath your feet. Far below us, buried in the ruins of the ages, is the palace of Priam and his treasure and the broken tower of Ilios and the skaian gates and the great ramp."

Long he talked to us of that Troy which was the home of sudden fear, whose treasures had filled the palaces of far cities. This I learned: he was a scholar who had given his wealth and strength to a most worthy purpose—that of collecting the best marbles of old Hellas. His will conveyed them to the Roman empire for the benefit of posterity.

Far into the night I listened to his story of the building and spoiling which had been done on the great mound of Troas. The ladies went with me to my room.

"By Apollo!" one of them exclaimed, "I feel like a ruined city. There is nothing left of me but scattered fragments."

"I feel like going to war," said the other as she seized a sword hanging on the wall.

"And I, like going to sleep," was my answer and that I soon did.

I slept until midday. The ladies came to my room with gifts of snow-white linen and a golden fillet for my head. They dressed my hair and body to their liking and then we joined their father in the triclinium and broke our fast. We entered the museum—a wing of the palace lighted from above, on either side of which were long rows of statues: Hermes, Eros, Aphrodite, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, the disc hurler, and many others. There too were sculptured columns and friezes.

"Here is the soul of old Hellas," said Saramalla with a proud gesture. Turning to his daughters, he added: "Stand her by the marble maid and let me have a look at the two."

They dressed my hair and draped my robe and posed me to his liking at the side of the noble figure. I wondered at his purpose.

"Now look across at Apollo and stand as still as you can," said the enthusiastic old gentleman. "I will call a friend to see the statues. I would know how soon he will discover that one of them is modern."

For a little time I was one of that silent assemblage speaking with dumb lips of a vision and a gift gone, perhaps forever, from the spirit and the hands of men. The gentle flattery of Saramalla and his daughters had

pleased me and filled me with proud and grateful thoughts of my noble fathers. An imperious, fateful figure with finger on her lips and eyes uplifted stood by the side of Apollo as if in command of that eternal silence of tongue and form around her. Pagan as they were it occurred to me that these were the children of a love, born of God—the love of truth and beauty. Therefore were they not sacred and immortal things which had in them the power to prevent their own destruction? In these soul-filled stones the hushed voice of the ancient time would be speaking to all the ages—as even now I vainly try to speak—of the power that may come to the soul of man. They were the first lanterns of heaven. Always, since that day, have I so regarded them.

I heard footsteps on the marble floor. Then nearer, the voice of Saramalla saying: "My cherished friend, I love a man of good taste. If you can choose out the best figure in this group and give me a sound reason for your choice, it shall be yours."

Slowly they approached, pausing here and there halted by the appeal of the more dramatic poses, Saramalla chatting of the peculiar charm of each.

I saw not nor did I suspect who was coming near until I heard the voice of my own Apollos saying: "The greatest master of all is he who shaped this figure and gave it the grace of the young olive and eyes like the pools of Heshbon. I love it best because it hath a beating, faithful heart."

The words were scarcely spoken when I was in his arms. O the long and lonely years, the perils, the distresses I had borne waiting for that moment! I

felt in his breast, and he in mine, that depth of joy which one may never know who has not suffered to attain it.

Soon we stood apart, my hands in his, surveying each other. Then said Apollos: "The Prodigal Son is like all men. They know not the value of love until they have known the husks and the swine."

I was astonished to behold how Saramalla and his daughters had been moved by looking upon us.

As he stood between the two ladies he said: "You are right, Apollos. Our God hath made no better thing than a good woman. I have seen how mighty is the love in her heart."

He brought a laurel wreath delicately wrought in wood and set it on my brow, saying: "I crown you, being persuaded that the power of woman shall be greater than the sword and the spear. It shall come to its own."

He took my hand in his and spoke the word "Maranatha."

"And I rejoice that peace hath come to this house," I answered.

"It came with Apollos on the fifth day of the last week. My heart had been strangely prepared by your faith and courage and by the prayers of a certain bandit."

I embraced him and kissed his cheeks. Slowly our little company left the museum. Its marble figures seemed to be looking down upon us pleasantly as if glad to have been relieved for a little time of their stern thoughts and occupations.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

I BEGAN with the intention of shaping a ewer and have moulded a flagon. This is the story of a love, a faith, and a life. My life is yet to see that mighty breaking down of which the Son of God had spoken. The path into which this Love and Faith of mine shall lead me I now foresee. In a swift ship come with me, my beloved, to the end of the story of which these little tales are a part.

As one tastes wine, I choose my words. My time is nearly spent. With a failing, hurried pen I must write of years when the hand of God had hold of the earth and everything was shaking loose.

Joined in wedlock, long we toiled at Colossæ and near places. Then came Paul and Barnabas after many journeys, afoot and by sea, through great perils in Syria and Cyprus and Pamphylia and the wild, robber-haunted lands of Pisidia to its Antioch. Thence to Iconium and Lycaonia. They had sown the seed of our faith and established churches and appointed elders.

Their story was like that of the siege of Ilios. I think that it will be the wonder of the ages. They fought that the Truth might be delivered from its bondage. In every town and city where they tarried they had made tents and sails and sold them to pay for food and shelter and to succor those in great need. They were brown and footsore and scarred and broken and nearly spent in the struggle. Heroic fighters were they—the Ajax and Achilles of the faith.

What had happened to the proud and wealthy youth of Tarsus who for my love of God had dragged me to prison? Let him speak here the words he spoke to our people:

"We have known perils of the mountains, perils of the city, perils of the sea. We have wandered in deserts and lonely places and found refuge in dens and caves of the earth. Of the Jews five times I received forty stripes save one. My back has been bled and furrowed by the scourge. Once I was stoned and left torn and broken being, as they thought, dead. But these are little things to one who has seen Jesus Christ with his own eyes."

Then this query: "Can our churches live and endure such persecution?"

"You may well ask it. We have seen our comrades tempted and sawn asunder and slain with the sword; afflicted and driven to wander destitute, in sheep skins and goat skins. And through this we have seen them standing steadfast, being rooted and built up in the faith. Now that Agrippa is dead my heart tells me that we shall have peace."

What a mystery to hear this man, once stony hearted, long tormented and provoked of men beyond measure, speaking of the love in his soul!

"Love never faileth," he was wont to say. "But whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away."

Paul and Barnabas were in Colossæ a month, being in the house of Philemon. They labored in the making and selling of tents, speaking at night with wonderful effect to our people. Peace had indeed

come to us and our church became a power in the land. They left us to go to Antioch. Apollos and I journeyed to Ephesus and later to Corinth. These cities were a plentiful field. We made it ready for the planting of Paul and the watering which Apollos so nobly performed.

In Corinth, after many years, Paul declared that the multitude of those he loved would see his face no more. He was going to Jerusalem. We tried to turn him from his purpose, for well we knew that for him Jerusalem was the valley of death. It had become a lawless city shaken by mighty tumults. We had heard much of its false prophets and hidden dangers and ruthless cruelties. Even the best of the Jews in the Holy City were then, it would appear, possessed of demons. But Paul, who had fought the beasts at Ephesus, would not be turned by the terrors of Jerusalem. He went where he saw that there was work for him to do. The church there was in great peril of destruction. Paul would try to save it.

We were of that band of pilgrims who journeyed with him by sea and land to Troas and Miletus and Coos and Rhodes and Patara and Tyre and Cæsarea. There in the house of Phillip, when Agabus, the prophet, had foretold what would come to pass in Jerusalem, we and all the people of Phillip's church besought him not to go to that city.

One of the dearest treasures in my memory is the look of him and the sound of his voice when he said: "Why do you break my heart by weeping? I am ready to be bound or to die in Jerusalem for my Lord and His children."

We went with him to the troubled city and saw

the fearful clamor for his life when the cry went abroad among the people that he taught against the law and was bringing Greeks and other Gentiles into the holy place.

We saw him standing among the Roman guards on the great staircase, trying to quiet the howling mob below. For a time his mighty hand and voice prevailed. When he spoke of his mission to the Gentiles they became as madmen, crying that it was not fit that he should live.

Then was their wrath like red-hot irons and they like thousands of shrieking, writhing devils. Even the bearded, shriveled faces of old men and women were as those of lions leaping on their prey. That seething crowd of the self-righteous raved and gnashed their teeth and threw dust in the air upon each other's heads and convulsively rent their garments. Those many eyes below us bulged in their sockets. What a frightful, revolting beast is this thing we call religion save the true light and love be in it!

The Roman guards under Claudius Lysias held the mob in check and shut Paul away in the castle of Antonia. Thence he was taken to Cæsarea by night with a guard of two hundred soldiers and seventy horsemen. From there, after long imprisonment, he was conveyed to Rome to be judged by Nero. We saw him no more.

We tarried at the house of a friend in the Holy City whose name even now I dare not mention. The zealots were in a mood so desperate that we were afraid to show our faces in the Mother Church. Spies were diligent and many of the new faith had been slain. It was a hopeless struggle. Our light in

this stronghold of darkness must soon flicker out. We had work to do among those who had in them the love of truth and now a time had come when we could not put our lives in needless peril. So we were in hiding for a month after the departure of Paul. By night we walked in the garden of our friend. And one night we first heard the doomful words from a man who wandered in the streets crying loudly:

A voice from the east;
A voice from the west;
A voice from the four winds;
A voice against Jerusalem and the Temple;
A voice against bridegrooms and brides;
A voice against the whole people.

Again and again we heard the prophetic words in the night. And this we soon learned. The crier was one Jesus, a rustic, the son of a husbandman of the name of Ananus. They had arrested and scourged him but he said nothing for himself and even while the lash fell upon him he continued to repeat his strange message.

They had taken him before the Roman procurator, who ordered that he be punished more severely. Then was he scourged to the bone. Yet did he shed no tears or make any supplication for himself but with every stroke he cried out: "Woe to Jerusalem!"

And when the procurator asked him whence he came and why he uttered these words he made no answer but still continued his lament. Then had he been dismissed as a madman. But for the prevailing superstition regarding madmen he would quickly have been slain.

Often was he beaten in the streets. But he spake

no ill words to those who smote him nor any thanks to those who gave him food. He took the punishment and ate his food and resumed his melancholy task.

What a mystery is the soul of man!

Hazar came up from Cæsarea. He had seen Paul and learned where to find us.

He said: "Again a river of gold is flowing into my stores. But I ask no more what I shall do to inherit eternal life. I come to send you to Antioch where there is need of you and my banker will give you generous help."

Hazar had not forgotten the wisdom of this world and used it to further his plans. Through liberal gratuities he enjoyed the favor and protection of the procurator and his officers.

He said to us: "A dead man has little value and if I am to go on with my work I must keep my head on my shoulders."

He did not despise the friendship of the Mammon of Unrighteousness.

"What has happened to your old servant—the merry Greek?" I asked.

"I know not, but I know that he is dead. Always, though he were far beyond my sight and hearing, I had the power to command him but I could not put a new heart in the man. That, I think, is a thing which every one must do for himself. Having learned that a legion was going forth to sweep his haunts my soul called him to Cæsarea for I had the will to save him. He came—but from the kingdom of the dead. It is a mystery of which I will speak no more."

This query sprang from my lips: "Was it by your command that he saved you from the lions?"

"No, that was a part of his plan. He loved me and he knew that the hope of finding our treasure would stay the hands of the Romans. He was a cunning man."

Hazar gave us horses and money. We journeyed to Antioch and were half a year in that city where lived Bartimæus and his daughter, fruitful in good works. After the death of Agrippa I, the Romans, in Gentile lands, had ceased to persecute us, and our numbers grew.

The toilers had changed their character. They were turning into a thrifty, law-abiding people, each respecting the rights of his neighbor. Their houses were improved and cleanly kept. The streets of the city were being cleansed of beggary and drunken brawls and forsaken women. The magistrates had more leisure. I wonder not that the Romans had begun to regard us with favor and to smile at the complaints of the stubborn Pharisees.

We went to Ephesus and Corinth and then to Colossæ—our beloved home. There we rested and there after many months came my son Julian to visit me. I had received letters that told of his schooling and of adventures and promotions in the army. He was a tribune, bronzed, stalwart, erect, dignified, a noble figure of a man, fresh from the great campaign of his father in Britannia and Gaul. Then it was that I felt the mother's pride and wonder.

He embraced me but did not speak until, standing apart and looking down upon me, he said: "I remember you, but you are not so slender and your hair is gray. I want to sit on the rug at your feet and hear you sing as I did of old."

I sang and told him of my faith and work. He

only smiled and turned our talk to other things. The eyes of his soul were not yet opened.

He brought a letter from Vespasian to Apollos. It said:

Your friend Paul is in my keeping. He lives comfortably in his own house and is always chained to a soldier as were you. I think that your testimony as to what happened in Jerusalem the day of his arrest, you being a Jew of a moderate and convincing manner of speech, might help in my purpose to secure his release. We are grown weary of that zeal for the one God which expresses itself with stones and daggers and the disregard of all law. Those people confirm our belief that the Christians are more to be respected. The only fault in the man Paul seems to be that he has offended the Pharisees. I enclose an order which will give you passage from Rhodes to the capital where you will immediately report to me.

In the evening Julian and his troop of horsemen set out for the nearest port and before the month ended my beloved one left me to take ship for Rome.

Great disorders arose in Judea. Many Jews were slain by Syrians in Cæsarea. Then came Gessius Florus to be the chief ruler, and a baser wretch was not among the friends of that half-witted degenerate who disgraced the throne. Florus seized a part of the Temple treasure. The Jews rose against him. Nearly four thousand of them were slaughtered in the market place. The people drove the soldiers from the city. They turned back the Roman army of Cestius which came down from Syria. Success lured them on. The great revolt was beginning.

News reached us in Colossæ of the burning that devoured more than half of the imperial city of Rome. It was the beginning of those heavy troubles which

came upon our people thirty-one years after the death of our Master. That year Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon, arrived with letters from Paul and Apollos. They hoped soon to be returning. Patiently I awaited them in the house of Miriam and Nehemiah with never a word of news to cheer my heart. Then a letter, unsigned, which was from the far-seeing Hazar. It said:

Rome has become the valley of death. The hirelings of Nero released the flame wolves which nearly devoured the city. He claims to have knowledge that the Christians were guilty of this outrage. He directs upon them the anger of the populace. He has started a fire which is likely to consume every man and woman of the faith in the capital. It may even spread through the empire. Therefore keep your heads down and be prepared to go in hiding.

Now a time had come when every day was a year and almost fifty years were behind me. Still in spite of my fear I kept my heart and hands busy and the promise of the Lord before me. The glory of youth had departed. The wisdom of age had come. The next year I went to Rhodes and took ship for Cæsarea to consult with my friend Hazar being minded to go to Rome in quest of Paul and Apollos. He turned me from my purpose. I tarried there with him and his family. Slowly the conviction grew into knowledge that both Paul and Apollos had perished.

Then came the great army of Vespasian and laid siege to the fortress of Jotapata and to the one at Gamala. It swept southward to Joppa and Cæsarea. No power could now avert the doom long since proclaimed against the Holy City.

Bandit chiefs and their followers who had held

every province at their mercy fled to Jerusalem and began to strengthen its defenses. These were the crafty John of Gischala and the red-handed giant Eleazer, chief of the Zealots. They were followed by the ferocious Simon, son of Gioras, who began to contend with them for supremacy.

Such tumults were in every city that Julian, with whom I had established communication, came to our house in Cæsarea and took me away with the army. So it happened that I was to see the legions of Rome throw their impassable loops around the city and set their engines of destruction at work. It is a strange and sad circumstance that nearly all the Jews of the old faith in Palestine had come up to the Temple from great and little places to the feast of the Passover. Thus were they as those caught in a trap.

I saw not the much honored Vespasian. His orders were now signed Titus Flavius Vespasian, Consul. His praise was on every lip. He had returned to Rome and left the army in command of his son Titus—a short, strong-built, pleasant-faced man. I remember that his neck was abnormally large.

The camp in which I lived was walled in and that not rashly. A great number of carpenters had quickly erected our buildings. My son was one of the staff of Titus and he and I had a room to ourselves. There were seven other women in the camp—the refugee wives of Roman residents in Palestine. Our hands were busy with mending and weaving and spinning. The wall had four gates large enough to admit the beasts and their burdens. The camp was divided into streets. In the middle was the house of the general in which favored members of the staff were ac-

commodated. Around it were the tents of lesser commanders and beyond them those of the common soldiers. The men lived together quietly and decently by companies. Their hours for sleep and duty were signalized by the sound of trumpets. Wood, water and corn were brought to each company.

It was a city built by the magic of well-trained hands with its market place and booths of handicraftsmen.

When the soldiers went forth to fight they did it in an orderly and quiet fashion. The footmen were armed with breastplates and headpieces. They carried a sword on either side of them, the left one being much the longer.

The mounted men wore headpieces and breastplates and a long sword on their right sides. They carried a pole of the length of a horse. A shield lay by them obliquely on one side of their beasts.

Now the conditions in the city were soon well known to us, a few deserters having come over the walls to our camps. Jerusalem was without a governor. The troops of robbers who had come to it from many parts were contending as to which should rule. There were more than 20,000 of these armed and warlike men under four savage, ambitious chieftains.

Suddenly a bloody and destructive war had begun within the walls. In fighting for the possession of the stored corn a large part of it was burned. These evil hosts were devouring the substance of the people and seizing all stores and sources of supply. They were looting the houses of the rich and fighting like ravening beasts over their spoil. They were the mill-

stones between which the decent citizens and the pilgrims were being ground to death.

The most eminent men in Jerusalem had been murdered. The robbers had sought out those most likely to be able to organize and lead the people against them. They had cast them into prison and soon had cut their throats.

These contending forces had agreed that they would allow no one to leave the city. Guards were at every gate and they stabbed to death those they caught endeavoring to escape.

Such was the posture of things within the city when the great siege began. Mighty walls were there but what wall had they to protect them against themselves since the one of honor and good will had been neglected?

Now Jerusalem was built upon two hills—one in the north and one in the south—and between them was that depression known as the Valley of the Cheesemongers. Around the lower hill in the south was the old wall, strongly built by David and hard to be taken because of the deep, precipitous valleys beyond it. The upper city was defended by three walls—the last built, a strong and beautiful structure begun by Agrippa and finished after the reign of Claudius.

On it were ninety towers, twenty cubits square and rising twenty above the top of the wall. They were two hundred cubits apart—solid and beautiful to behold, with their turrets and battlements and their masonry as nicely joined as that of the Temple. The whole compass of the city was thirty-three furlongs.

There was one tower, named for Phasælis, the

brother of Herod, which rose ninety feet above and beneath the cloisters. Great lanterns, like those of the tower of Pharos, glowed in it by night. Beyond it were the grounds of the king's palace with their groves and canals and dovecotes. Often had I seen from afar the roofs of the palace splendid with those ornaments that please the eyes of kings. There were rooms in it so vast that a hundred guests could sleep in them with comfort.

Now have I set before you, my beloved, the problem of the vast army of Titus. He divided it into three parts, ours being on the Mount of Olives. First of all the trees near the city were cut down. Then the suburbs were destroyed by fire. The timber was used to build banks near the wall in the midst of which the great war engines were placed so that the men who worked them would be protected from the darts and arrows of the enemy.

These engines were skilfully contrived. Some of them threw darts and some stones of the size of a talent—larger even than a man's head. The great engines that hurled the heavy stones made a noise like the breaking down of a giant cedar. The missile hissed and moaned as it clove the air in a flight longer than two furlongs. Its blow shattered roofs and buildings and ploughed a bloody furrow through crowds of people.

Those who stood with slings and bows on the wall watched the coming of the stone, its color being white. Then the Jews raised a great shout: "The stone cometh!"

And all threw themselves down or scattered out of its path. The Romans contrived a way to prevent

this by blacking the stones. The enemy was not able, then, to see them. Often many were destroyed thereafter at a single flight of the stone.

At three chosen points Titus moved his great war machines near the wall. Of a sudden the heavens were filled with the crashing and battering and roaring of the first onset. A moaning shower of heavy stones fell in the upper city. Meanwhile the prodigious rams were shaking the great wall with thunderous and rhythmic blows. At the changing of the men, near sunset, there was a moment's lull in the tempest in which we could hear the cries of terror and distress in the city. Then the words came to me:

Let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains. And let him that is in the field not turn back to take up his garment.

That day the bandits in the city made a truce with each other.

In the night we saw great numbers of them running on the wall, with torches, of which every man bore as many as he could. These, flaming, they hurled at the engines some of which were set on fire. Darts flew at our men, thick as hail, from the hands of the skilful throwers.

To prevent these sallies Titus built three towers each fifty cubits high near the wall. On these the lighter engines were placed with men to work them. These towers had timbers covered with plates of iron and could not therefore be set afire. The enemy found it difficult to reach those, lifted thus above them, by reason of their height. So they were driven from the wall.

The great ram called "Nico," because it conquered

all things and was never weary, began to prevail against the powerful masonry. Bang! bang! bang! Night and day the doomful, earthquaking boom of the mighty hammer! The tireless power of Rome was behind it. Three hundred and sixty hours it labored. Then a shout went around the city. The ram's head had crushed its way through the great, first wall.

The resistless engine began its work on the second barrier. The bandits fought against us reckless of their lives.

In five days the second wall was taken and the Romans poured through the breach. Suddenly they were set upon by great numbers. Those who had got in were compelled to make the best resistance they could, being unable to flee quickly through the narrow breach. Many were slain. In this attack all the Romans were driven out of the city. They soon regained their position, the Jews having made a wall of their own bodies in the breach.

Then it was that through Josephus—a distinguished Jew in our camp—Titus besought the enemy, shouting loudly beyond the reach of his darts, to cease resistance so that the city might be saved. The Jews, thinking this a sign of weakness, were now the more determined.

Certain rich men and women were, after this, able to escape to the Romans. They brought with them what gold they could lay their hands upon, not in their pockets but in their stomachs, having swallowed it. The robbed people were in the midst of a ghastly famine. To such a pass it had come that parents and children fought with each other over the scrapings in the bottom of the meal box.

When the robbers saw a house that was shut up it was taken to mean that those within had food. They broke down the doors and searched from cellar to roof. If they found the family eating, they took the food even out of their throats. If one was seen in good flesh he was tortured until he revealed the source of his nourishment. The poor folk crept out of the city by night as far as the Roman guards to gather wild plants and herbs.

So, many people, emboldened by the severity of the famine, came out to gather food. They were whipped and sent back but still they came. And Titus resolved to make an example of them. Ambushes were laid and as many as five hundred in a night were captured. These were shut in a pen until their number was about two thousand. Crosses were made and set in the ground within sight of the walls. Then the prisoners were nailed upon the crosses.

I think of that vast row, a mile long, of quivering, moaning men and women as the dividing line between the pagan and the Christian world. My soul was on a cross among them.

Titus began raising great banks hard by the untaken wall—the first, near the tower of Antonia. The Jews had undermined the space beneath it, supporting the earth above with timbers daubed with pitch and bitumen. When our bank was finished they set these timbers afire and our works fell in flaming confusion.

The defenders attacked in great numbers and with such courage that our men were sorely pressed to the very edge of our fortifications. There stood the camp guard—the “Friends of Death.” They were

the chosen men whose backs were against that terrible law of the Romans which beheaded the one who left his post save to go to the realm of darkness. When one fell another ran to his place. These saved the camp but not until many were slain. Among them was my son. I found him, after the enemy had fled, lying with his sword in his right hand. Thus many a time I had seen him lie, as a child, when sleep had overcome him, still clinging to his beloved toy.

Titus held counsel of his commanders. Next day they set themselves with furious energy to the task of encompassing the city save at the precipices, with a wall of their own. In three days it was done. Jerusalem was now like a sealed tomb. No food could enter save it fell from the skies. Only the wings of Death could deliver its inhabitants.

The famine devoured the people by the houseful. The lanes of the city were strewn with the dead bodies of the aged. Children and young people tottered about swollen with the fever in their bellies and falling to rise no more. All natural feeling had long been dead in them and in those who saw them fall. They lay rotting in the streets, for none were able to give them burial.

No sound of mourning was heard. The time of that was far behind them. Every house had become a sepulchre. A silence like that of death itself had fallen upon the living. Even the robbers, gaping with want, ran about staggering like mad dogs, reeling through the doors of houses in a raging quest, seizing girdles and old shoes and gnawing the leather.

Titus in going his rounds through the valleys saw the growing mound of dead bodies, innumerable as the leaves of the forest. Having been cast out they had rolled down the steeps in the south.

I shall write no more of these scenes that stretch the face with horror through which the direst tragedy since the beginning of the world moved onward to its climax.

Vespasian was Emperor of Rome when came that fateful day of the destruction of the Temple—the tenth of Lous, on which day, long before, the King of Babylon had burned it.

There was much fire food in the mighty structure—cedar beams and ceilings and frames of oak and cabinets and fittings of polished terebinth and rugs and curtains. I saw the furious assault of the swarming legions. Even their commander—son of the emperor—could not stay their hands in the tumult. Here was that treasure, dear to the heart of the Jews, and they would not spare it or any who strove to defend it.

I saw the Romans climbing to the great golden window with their torches. I saw the spreading of the flames until the mountain-like mass of splendor was wrapped in their embrace. I saw the falling of the beautiful gates. I heard the shrieking of beams and rafters in the heat. I saw them go down with mighty shouts into the seething, roaring, flaming pit below.

The time was not far from us now when one stone would not be left upon another.

I thought of that doomful day when the little bird sang mournfully and the earth trembled. I saw in

it and in the spirit which led to it the very beginning of these sore troubles. Jerusalem had lost its soul. *Now* it was as dead as those eleven hundred thousand who had perished in the siege.

No more would the long lines of pilgrims be streaming in from far lands, bringing gold and incense, to bend their knees and bow their heads in the sublime Temple of their God.

CHAPTER XIX

THE END OF DORIS AND THESE MEMORIES

PALESTINE was dead. I rode northward with the learned Josephus and part of a legion. We were on our way to Tyre where we were to take ship, I to Rhodes, he and the soldiers to Rome, where they were to have a part in the Triumph of Titus.

It was he who reminded me that the things foretold by the prophets had come to pass.

"Have you read the words of Jeremiah?" he asked and then he spoke them:

"The carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of heaven. . . . I will turn Jerusalem into heaps. I will make it a den of dragons. I will make the cities of Judah desolate. . . . The sound of the millstones and the light of the candle shall cease."

We passed through the cities, empty save for the aged and infirm, the lepers and the beggars. We traversed fertile valleys now deserted and overgrown with bushes, weeds and thistles.

Said my companion: "These are the words of Isaiah. Long, long ago were they written:

"Joy is gone out of the plentiful field. No more is there singing in the vineyards. The vintage shouting has ceased and the strong cities are as a forsaken bough."

At last these things had come to pass.

As we rode on he told me of the history of the Jews

that he was writing. He asked many questions of my Master and His work. I told him certain of my stories.

He said: "These are great things, but I must touch them lightly, if at all."

I needed not to ask his reason for this. The Romans of wealth and power were his friends and patrons. His hands were stayed. He could write only what would please them.

Then it was that I decided to make haste to put these memories in a book. I left him at Rhodes and journeyed on to Colossæ. There these many years have I lived and wrought. I am old. Miriam and Nehemiah and Hazar and scores of my beloved friends have perished in the persecutions of Domitian. I have been spared because I was a friend of Vespasian, generously mentioned in his will.

My turn is near, for last night I defied the imperial edict and told my stories to those who came to my little house. To-day I think that I am near the greatest adventure of these many of which I have written.

I sit by the window as I write so that I may see them when they come to take me to my death. Then will my Arab servant hide the sheets of vellum in a place we know. They may be destroyed, but the whispering dust of the multitude of the slain will tell its story. Men forget, but humanity does not forget. The soldiers are coming. Good-bye, my beloved, whoever, wherever you may be. I am come at last almost to the gate of my Father's house whither my love has led me.



